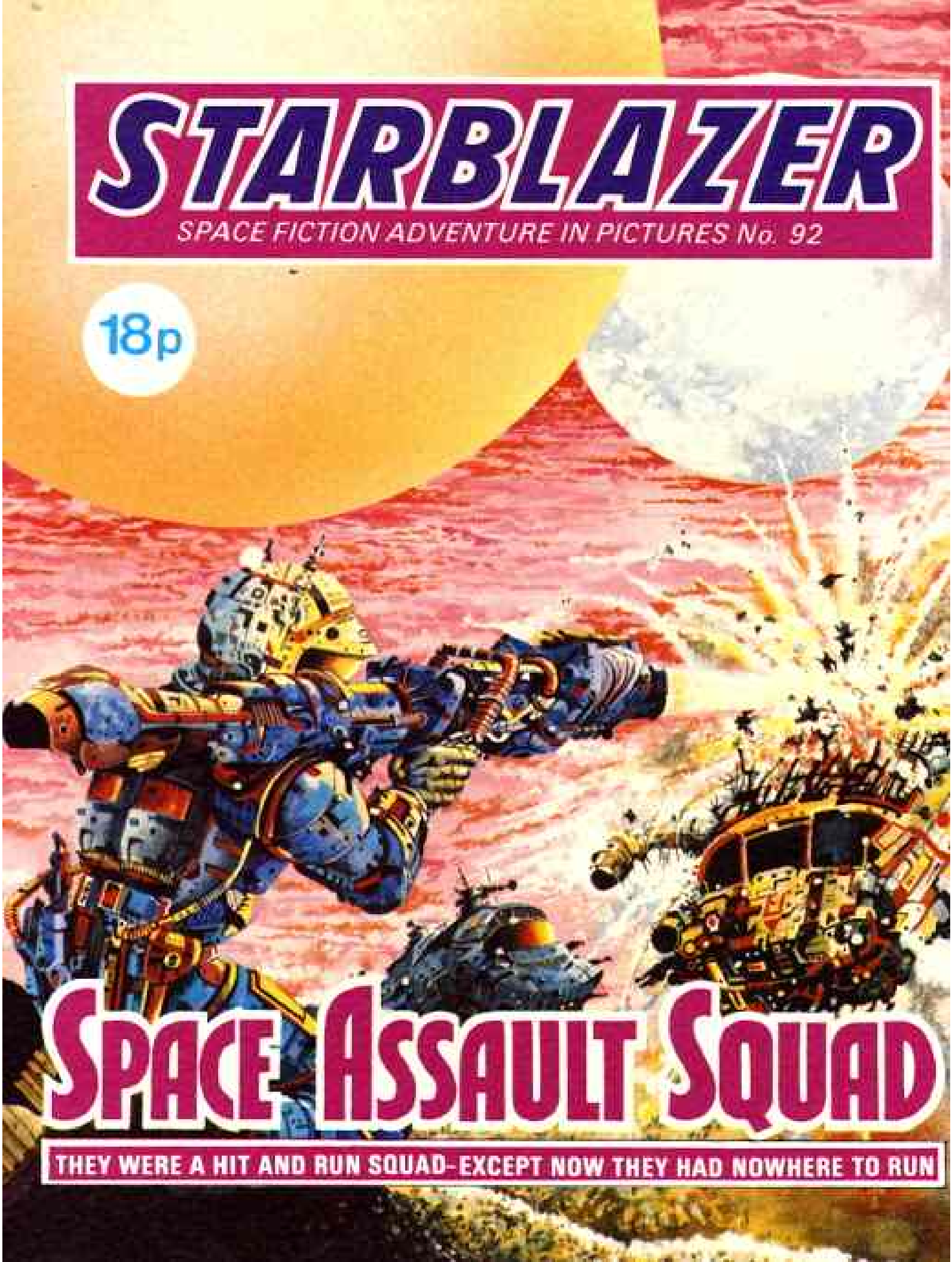
STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 92

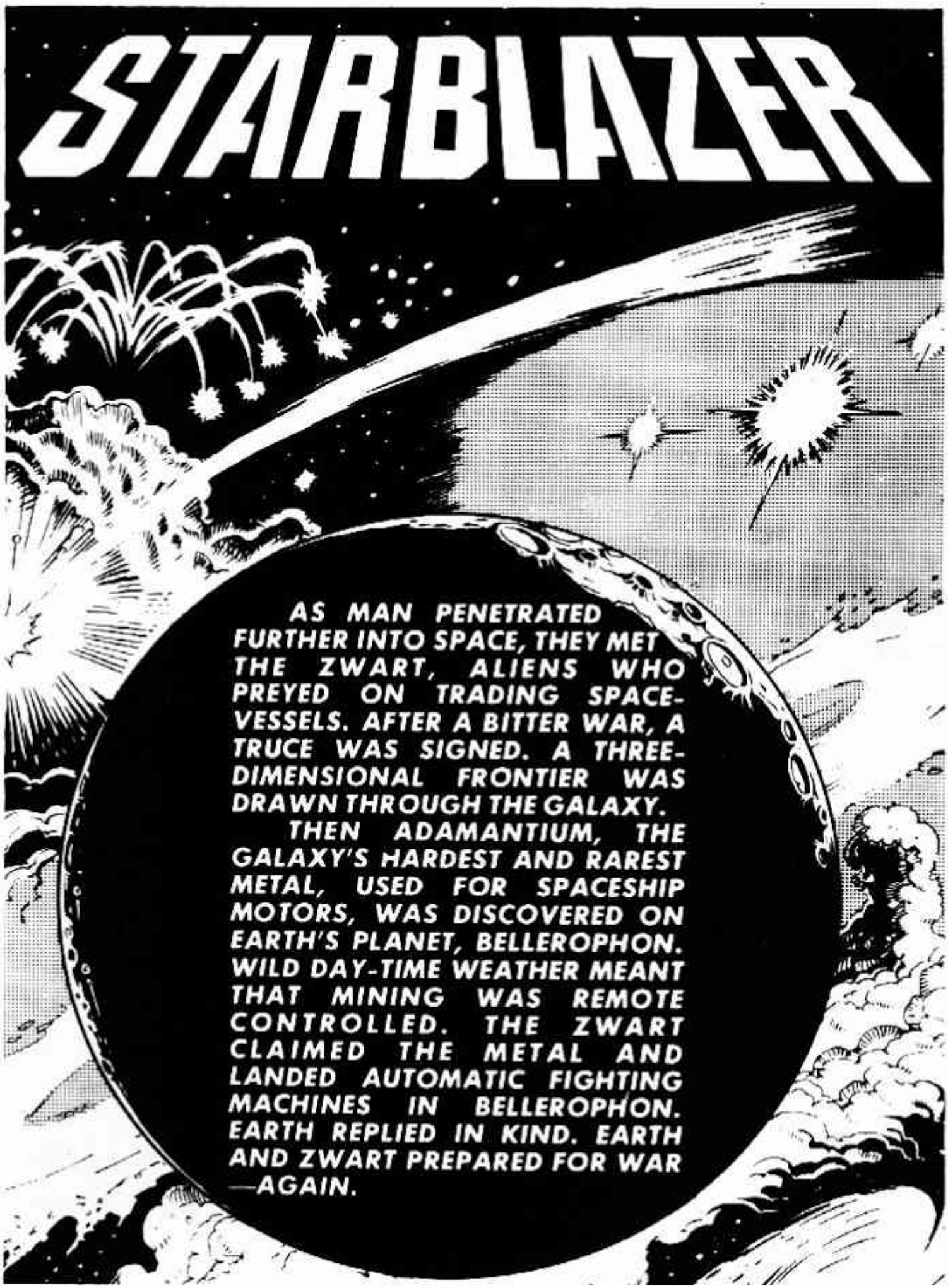
18p

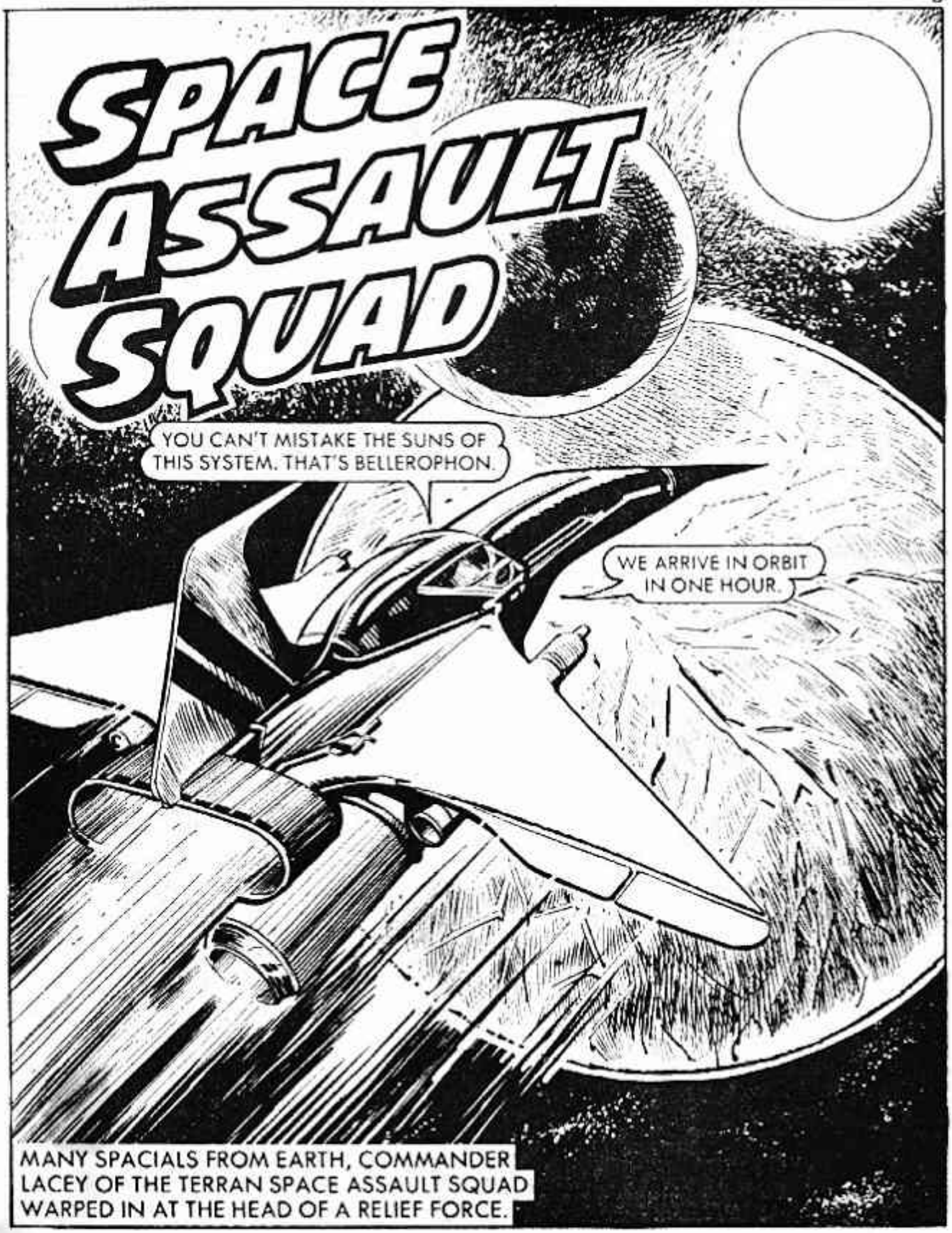


SPACE ASSAULT SQUAD

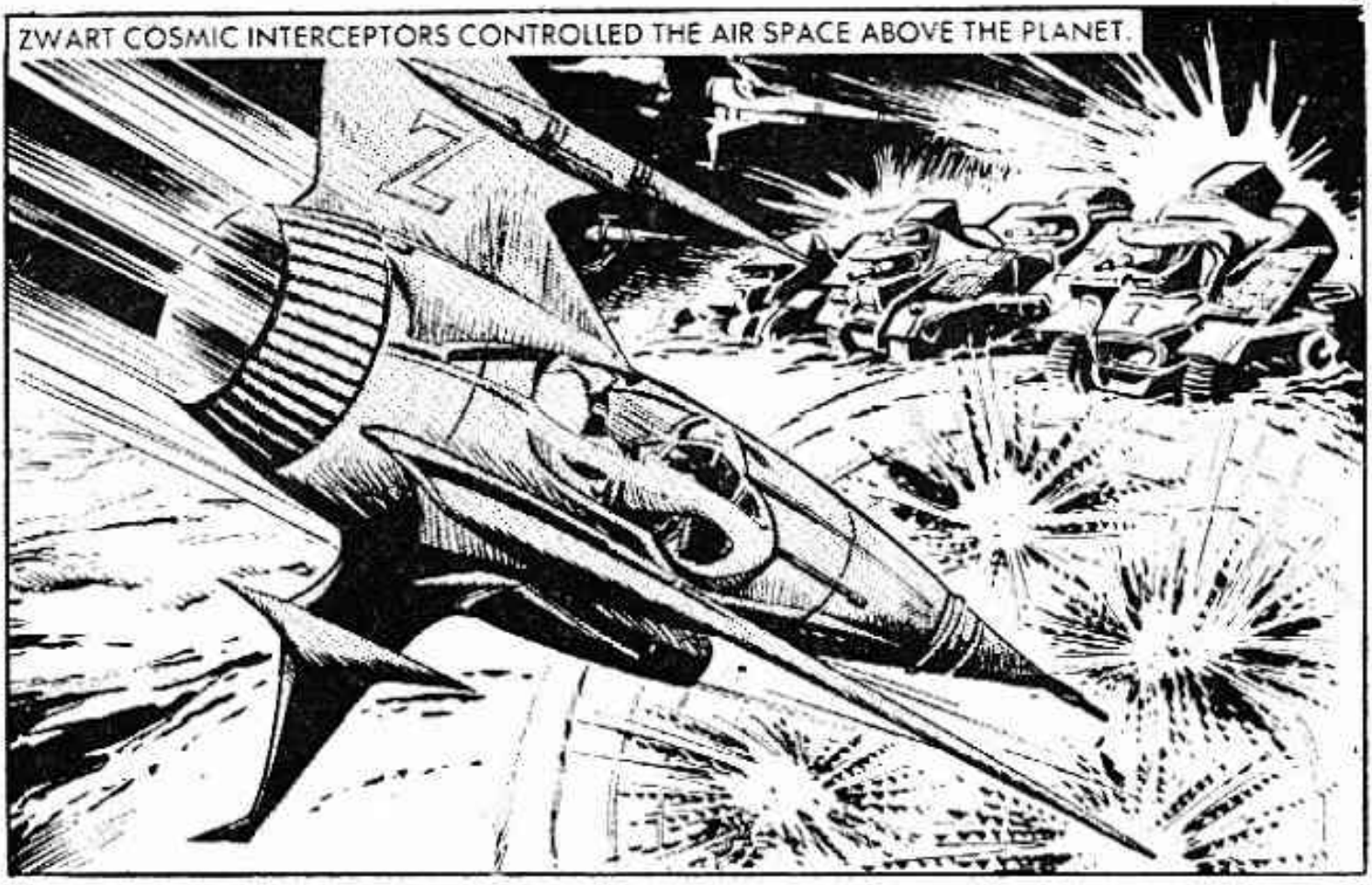
THEY WERE A HIT AND RUN SQUAD-EXCEPT NOW THEY HAD NOWHERE TO RUN

STARBLAZER


AS MAN PENETRATED FURTHER INTO SPACE, THEY MET THE ZWART, ALIENS WHO PREYED ON TRADING SPACE-VESSELS. AFTER A BITTER WAR, A TRUCE WAS SIGNED. A THREE-DIMENSIONAL FRONTIER WAS DRAWN THROUGH THE GALAXY.
THEN ADAMANTIUM, THE GALAXY'S HARDEST AND RAREST METAL, USED FOR SPACESHIP MOTORS, WAS DISCOVERED ON EARTH'S PLANET, BELLEROPHON. WILD DAY-TIME WEATHER MEANT THAT MINING WAS REMOTE CONTROLLED. THE ZWART CLAIMED THE METAL AND LANDED AUTOMATIC FIGHTING MACHINES IN BELLEROPHON. EARTH REPLIED IN KIND. EARTH AND ZWART PREPARED FOR WAR —AGAIN.


SPACE ASSAULT SQUAD
YOU CAN'T MISTAKE THE SUNS OF THIS SYSTEM. THAT'S BELLEROPHON.
WE ARRIVE IN ORBIT IN ONE HOUR.
MANY SPACIALS FROM EARTH, COMMANDER LACEY OF THE TERRAN SPACE ASSAULT SQUAD WARPED IN AT THE HEAD OF A RELIEF FORCE.

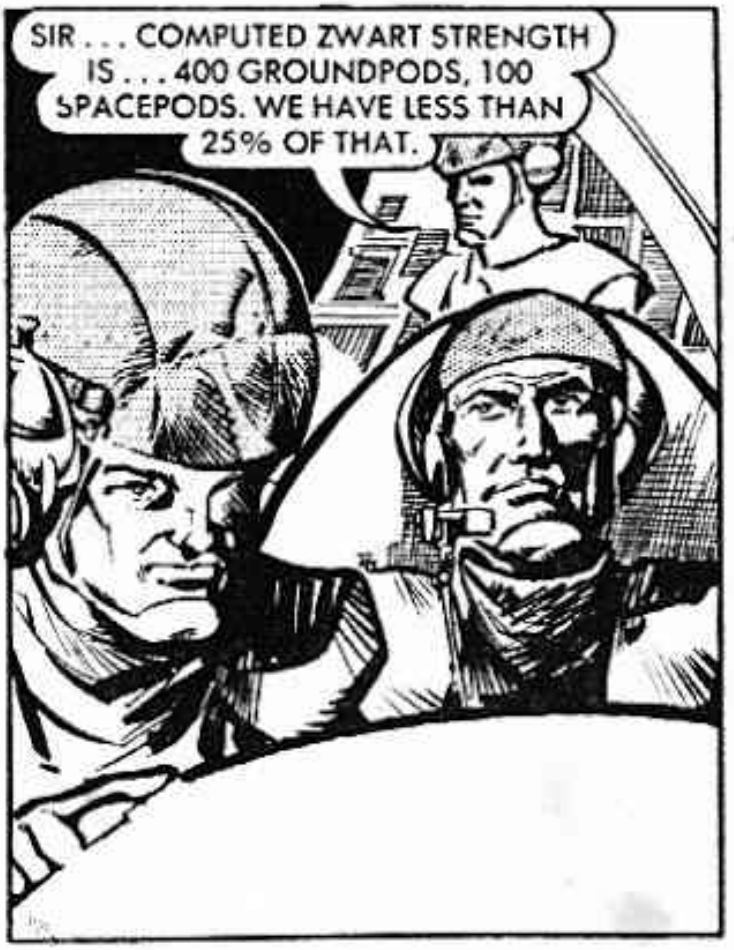
WITH NO CLOUD, BELLEROPHON'S DAYTIME TEMPERATURES WERE HIGH. THE SOLAR- POWERED MINING CRAFT AND WARMACHINES TOILED FROM DAWN TO DUSK, BUT AS THE NIGHT CLOSED IN THE SOLAR PANELS COULD NO LONGER SUPPLY SUFFICIENT POWER TO ACTIVATE MACHINERY. BATTLE CEASED—UNTIL DAWN.


ZWART COSMIC INTERCEPTORS CONTROLLED THE AIR SPACE ABOVE THE PLANET.

IN EARTH'S GROUNDBASE —
ONLY SEVENTEEN OF OUR PODS RESPONDING NOW, CONTROLLER.
NEARLY DARK, THANK FORTUNA! ANY LONGER AND THE ZWART WOULD HAVE CRIPPLED THE LOT.

THE SOLAR PANELS, ON EVER REDUCING POWER, FAILED TO SUPPLY SUFFICIENT ENERGY TO KEEP THE LANDCRAFT ACTIVATED —
THE BATTLE'S STOPPING! I'VE SEEN ENOUGH. HOW CLOSE DO YOU RECKON THE ZWART ARE?

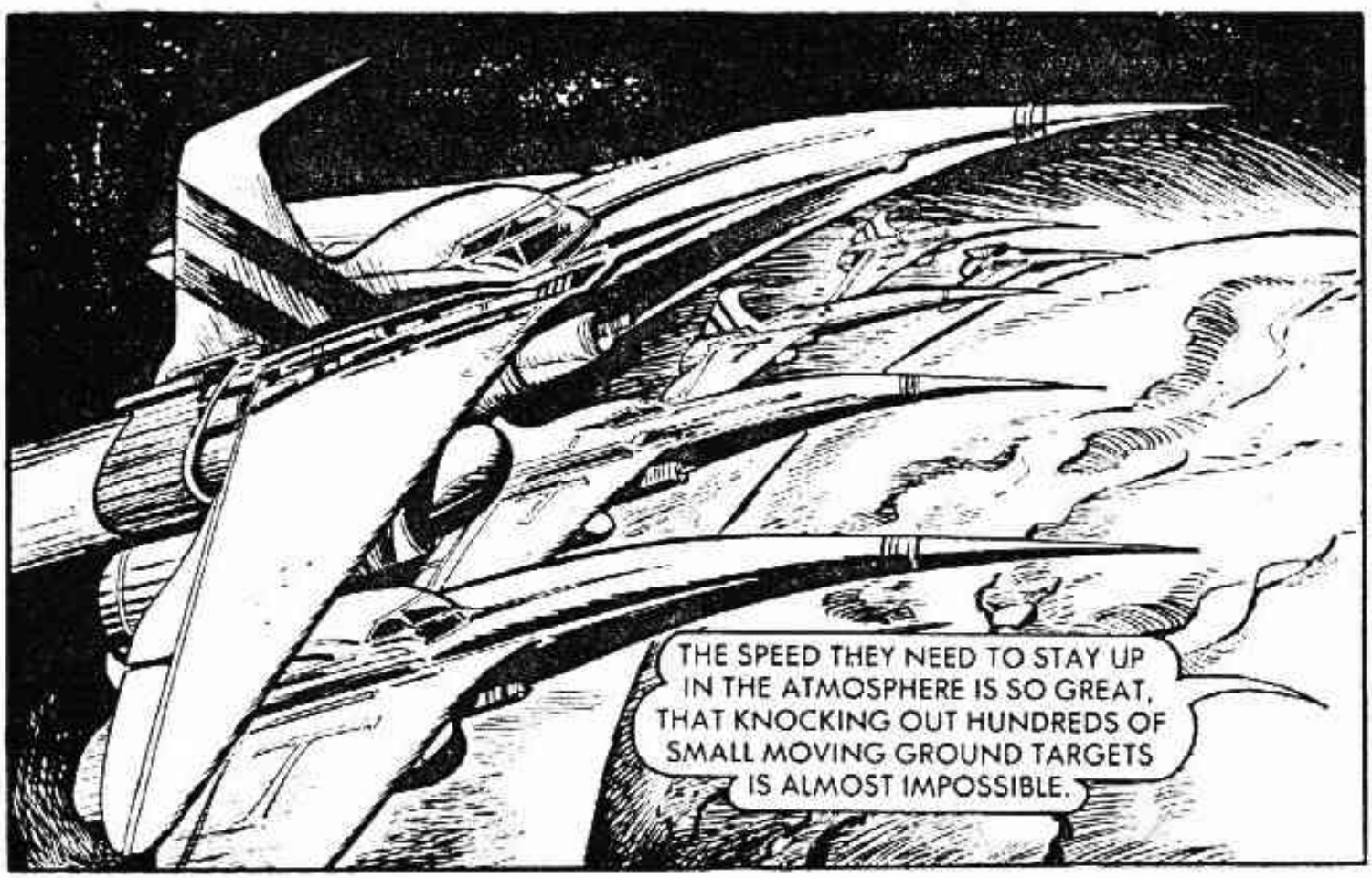
ACCORDING TO GROUNDSCAN — ABOUT 50 UNITS.
THEY'LL OVER-RUN US TOMORROW.


SIR . . . COMPUTED ZWART STRENGTH IS . . . 400 GROUNDPODS, 100 SPACEPODS. WE HAVE LESS THAN 25% OF THAT.

COMMANDER LACEY HAS ARRIVED. TOO LATE, PERHAPS. SET DEMOLITION CHARGES. THE ZWART WON'T GET THE BASE — AND WE'LL TAKE SOME OF THEIR TANKS WITH IT!

LACEY LANDED HIS SHIP, AND WENT TO MEET THE EARTHBASE CONTROLLER.
WELCOME, COMMANDER. THE SITUATION IS DESPERATE, AND I HOPE YOUR TRIP ISN'T POINTLESS.
WE'VE GOT PLENTY SHIPS UP IN ORBIT — THEY'LL HELP.

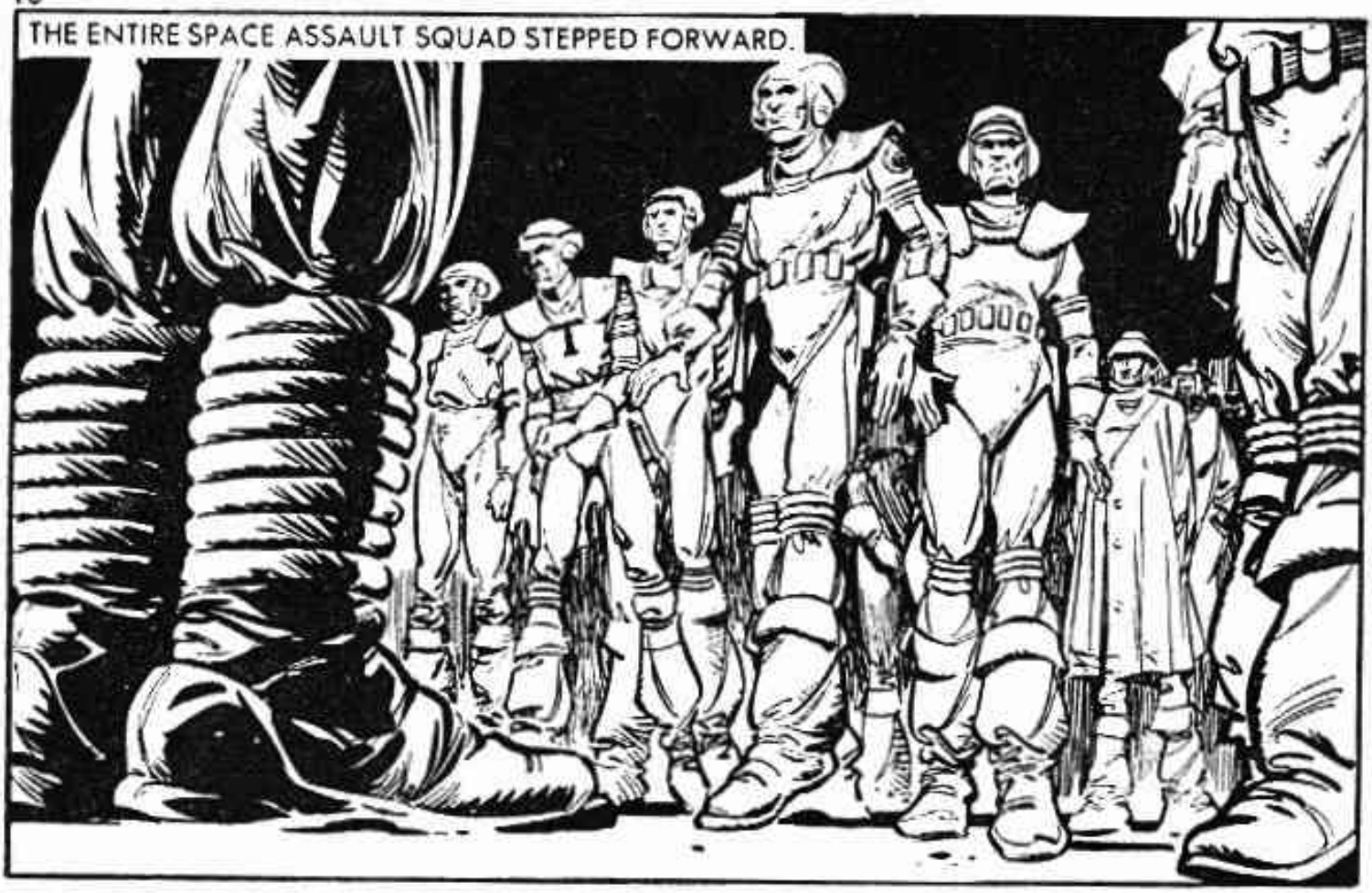
BUT SPACESHIPS DON'T REALLY HELP . . .
WHY NOT?


THE SPEED THEY NEED TO STAY UP IN THE ATMOSPHERE IS SO GREAT, THAT KNOCKING OUT HUNDREDS OF SMALL MOVING GROUND TARGETS IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE.

STRANGE! IN ALL THAT BATTLEFIELD, NOT A SINGLE MAN! BUT MEN ARE THE ANSWER. ALTHOUGH I REALISE THE WIND AND HEAT DURING THE DAY WOULD KILL THEM.
THEY WOULDN'T LAST A SECOND COME SUNRISE!

NOT DURING THE DAY . . . BUT AT NIGHT.

I WANT VOLUNTEERS TO COME ON A DEMOLITION RAID — TONIGHT.


THE ENTIRE SPACE ASSAULT SQUAD STEPPED FORWARD.

OKAY! TONIGHT WE GO OUT TO DISABLE THE ZWART ARMOUR BEFORE THEY START UP AGAIN AT DAWN — WHILE THEIR BATTERIES ARE RUN DOWN.

ALL MEN WERE QUICKLY ARMED —
HURRY IT UP! WE LEAVE IN TEN MINUTES.

THIS SURPRISE ATTACK COULD SWING THINGS OUR WAY.

MINING BASE TRUCKS WERE USED TO TRANSPORT THE TASK FORCE.
WHY CAN'T WE USE NUCLEAR POWERED GROUNDCRAFT? THEY WOULD GIVE US A DISTINCT ADVANTAGE BY OPERATING ALL THE TIME.
IT WOULD BE TOO DANGEROUS! THERE'S SOMETHING UNEXPLAINED IN BELLEROPHON'S ATMOSPHERE WHICH CAUSES NUCLEAR POWER TO GO CRITICAL AND EMIT LETHAL RADIATION . . .

ALL QUIET SO FAR, BUT IF ANY ZWART MACHINES ARE STILL ON THE MOVE, WE'VE HAD IT.

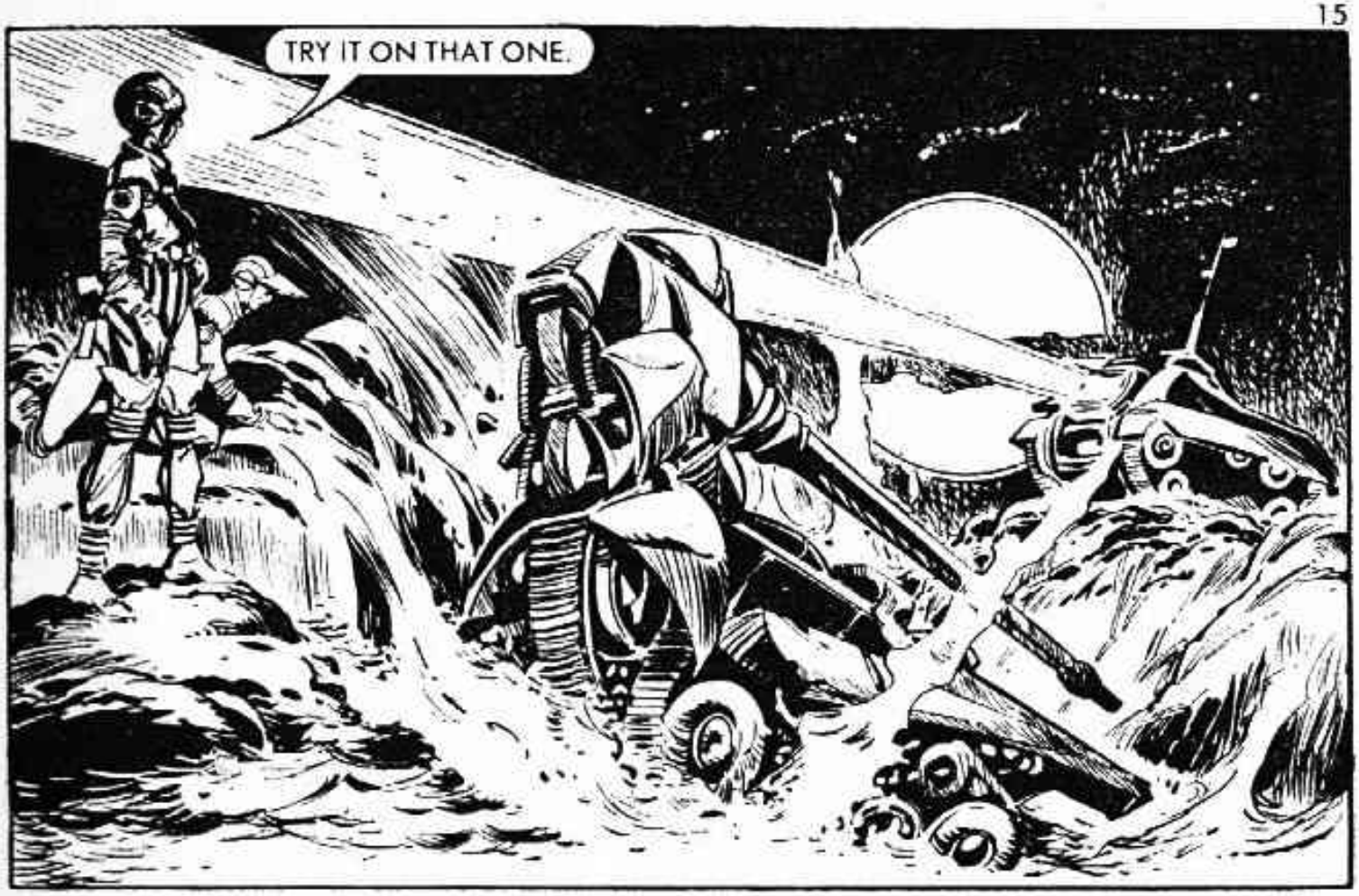
THAT'S ZWART! WE'VE REACHED THEIR FRONT RUNNERS.
LOOK OUT! WE'VE SET IT MOVING!

THE CRAFT OPENED FIRE —

— AND HIT THE LEAD POD.

A SPACEPOD DESTROYED BY A FLASHING SEARCHLIGHT!
YES—OBVIOUSLY THERE'S ENOUGH POWER IN THE LIGHTS TO ACTIVATE THE TANK.

LACEY TURNED THE ACCIDENT TO HIS ADVANTAGE —
" WAKE UP " THE REAR TANK. MAYBE IT WILL HIT THE OTHER BEFORE ITS PHOTOELECTRIC CELL CAN START EVASIVE ACTION.


TRY IT ON THAT ONE.

DIRECT HIT — THE TANKS HAVE DESTROYED EACH OTHER.

FIND YOUR OWN TARGETS.

MANY CRAFT WERE HIT—

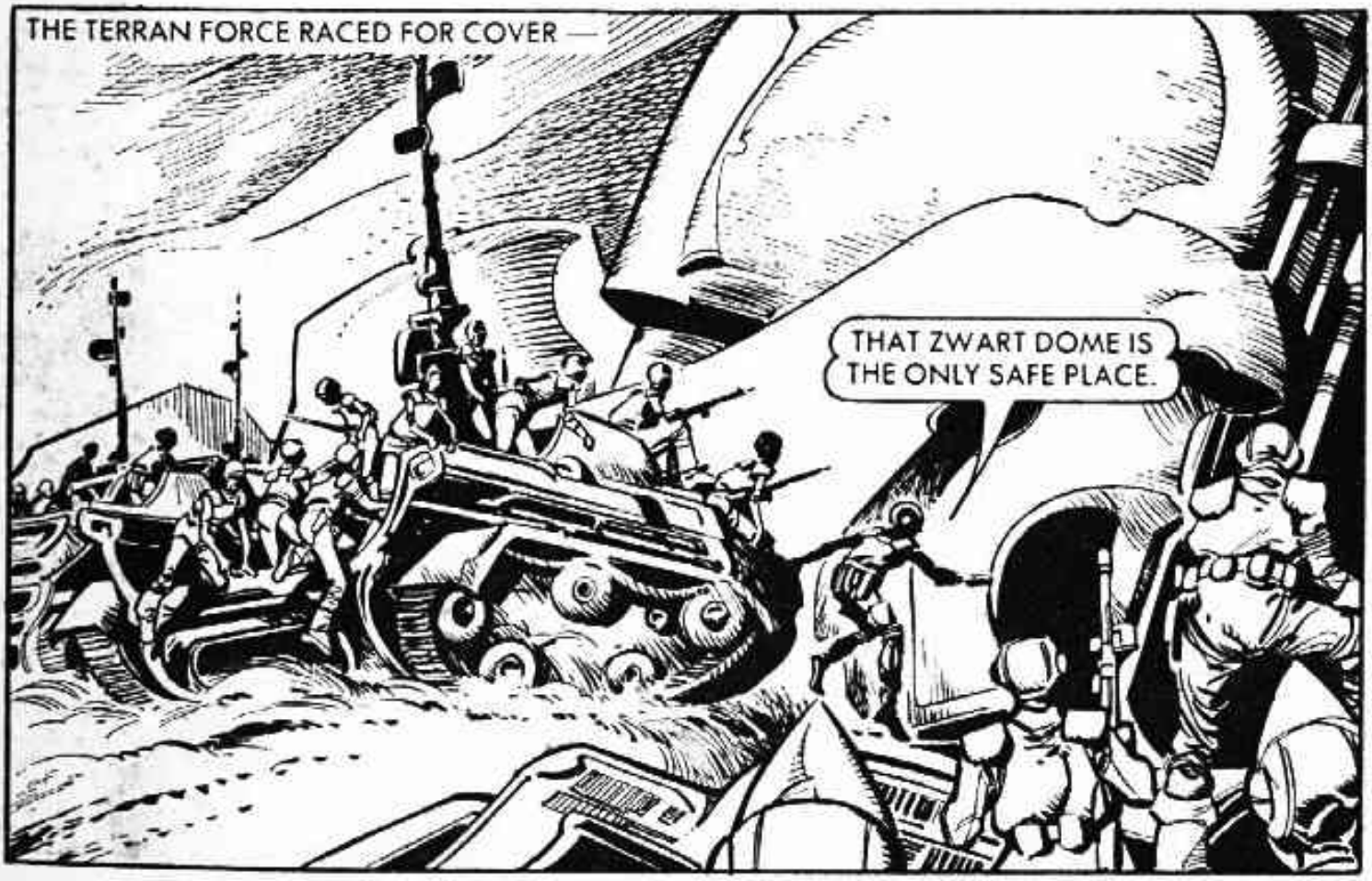
BUT A NUMBER OF THE S.A.S. WERE ALSO HIT —
KEEP DOWN — THEY'RE USING HEAT-SEEKING SHELLS.

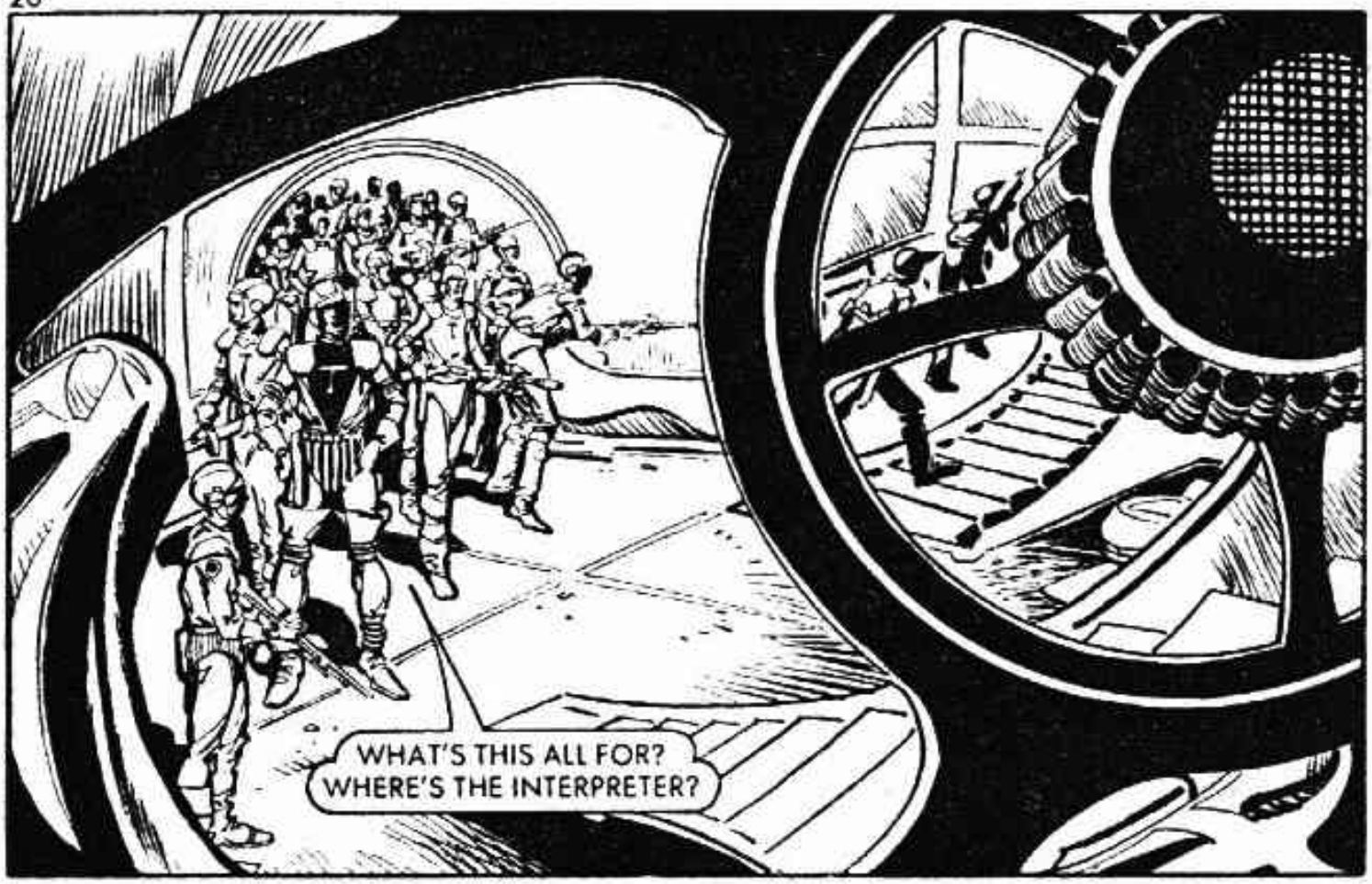
THE LONG NIGHT ENDED WITH MANY ZWART VEHICLES CRIPPLED.

AS THE TRIPLE SUNS ROSE —
DAWN! EVASIVE ACTION! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.
ALL UNITS! FULL SPEED AHEAD.

IF THE HEAT-SEEKING GADGETS FIND US —
THE LASERTHERMS WILL FRY US.

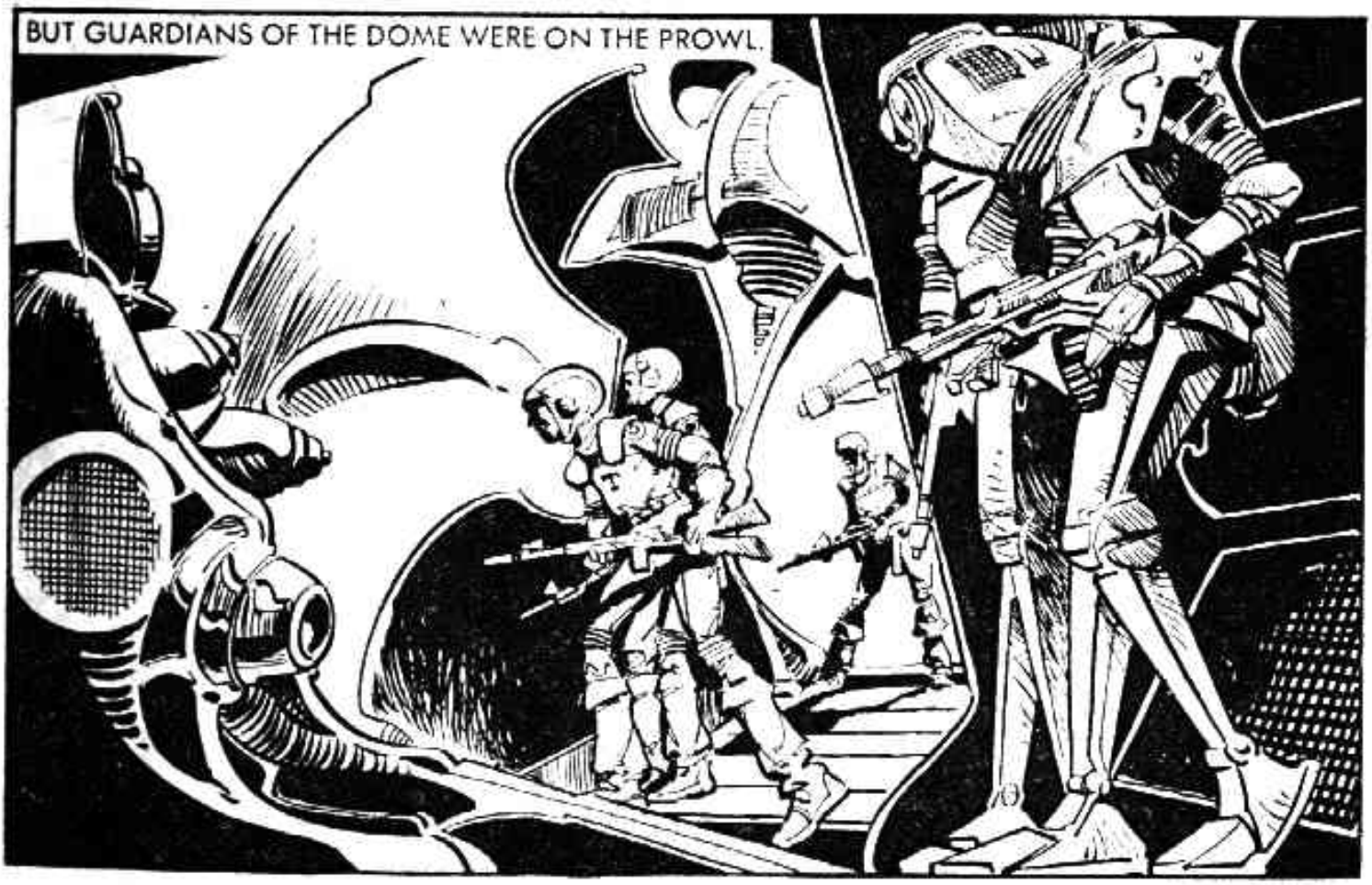
MAKE FOR THAT DOME!


THE TERRAN FORCE RACED FOR COVER —
THAT ZWART DOME IS THE ONLY SAFE PLACE.


WHAT'S THIS ALL FOR? WHERE'S THE INTERPRETER?

AS FAR AS I CAN MAKE OUT, IT IS A CONTROL PANEL.
FOR THE WAR MACHINES, NO DOUBT.

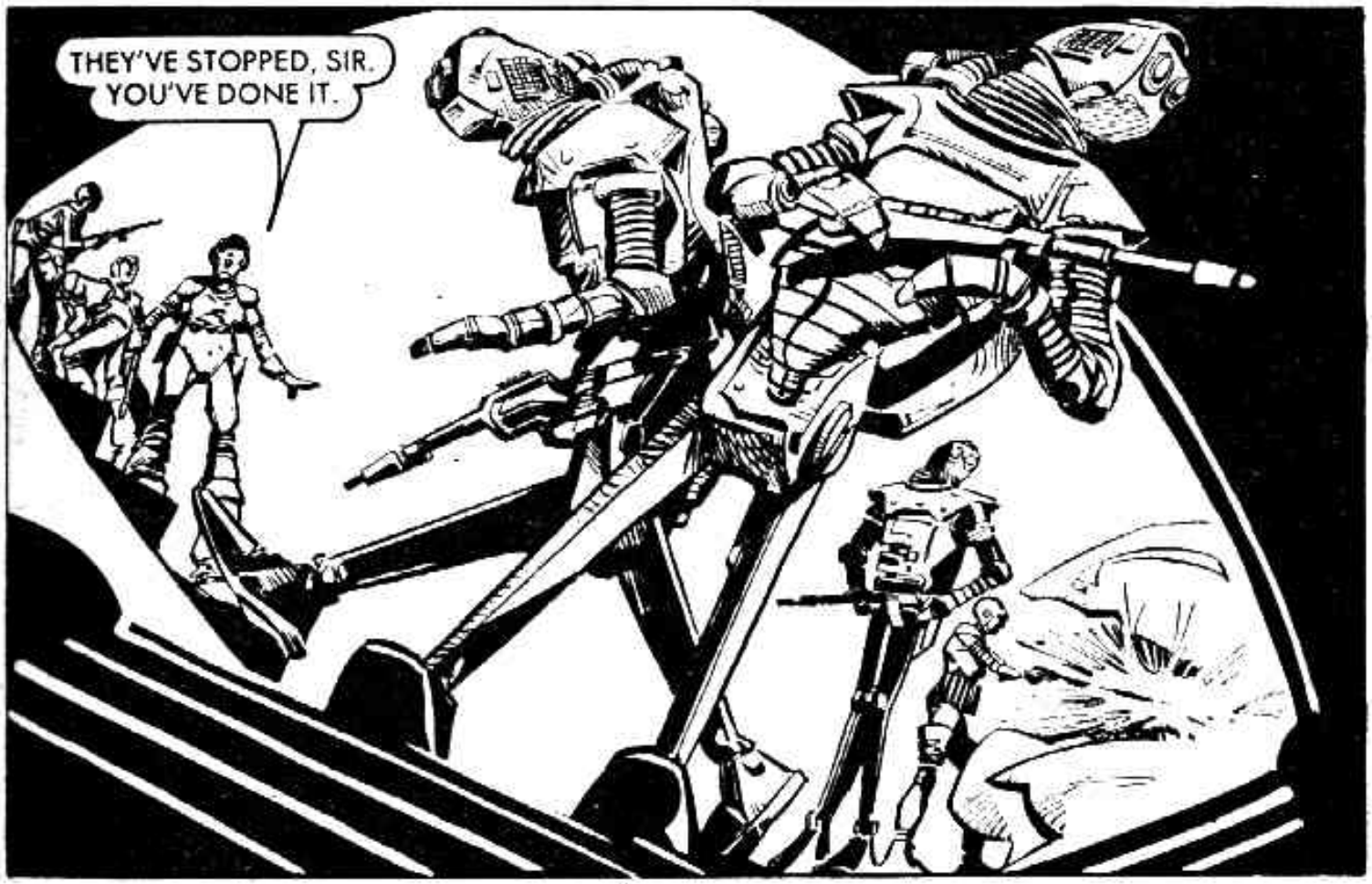
DESTROY IT!


BUT GUARDIANS OF THE DOME WERE ON THE PROWL.

ROBOTS! AIM AT THEIR EYES OR NECKS.

GET HIGHER UP! IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE OF PICKING THEM OFF.

IF THIS DOME CONTROLS TANKS, WHY NOT THE ROBOTS AS WELL?
LACEY BLASTED THE ACTIVATING BUTTONS.


THEY'VE STOPPED, SIR. YOU'VE DONE IT.

WITH THE ROBOTS STOPPED, THE MEN CONTINUED WITH THEIR DEMOLITION.

THE LAST PROTON MINI-SHELL ADDED TO THE WRECKAGE OF THE DOME.

WE'VE EVENED UP THE ODDS A BIT.

THAT'S OUR TRANSPORT. ALL ABOARD.

THE TASK FORCE CLIMBED ABOARD —
OUR FUTURE WILL BE DECIDED IN SPACE.

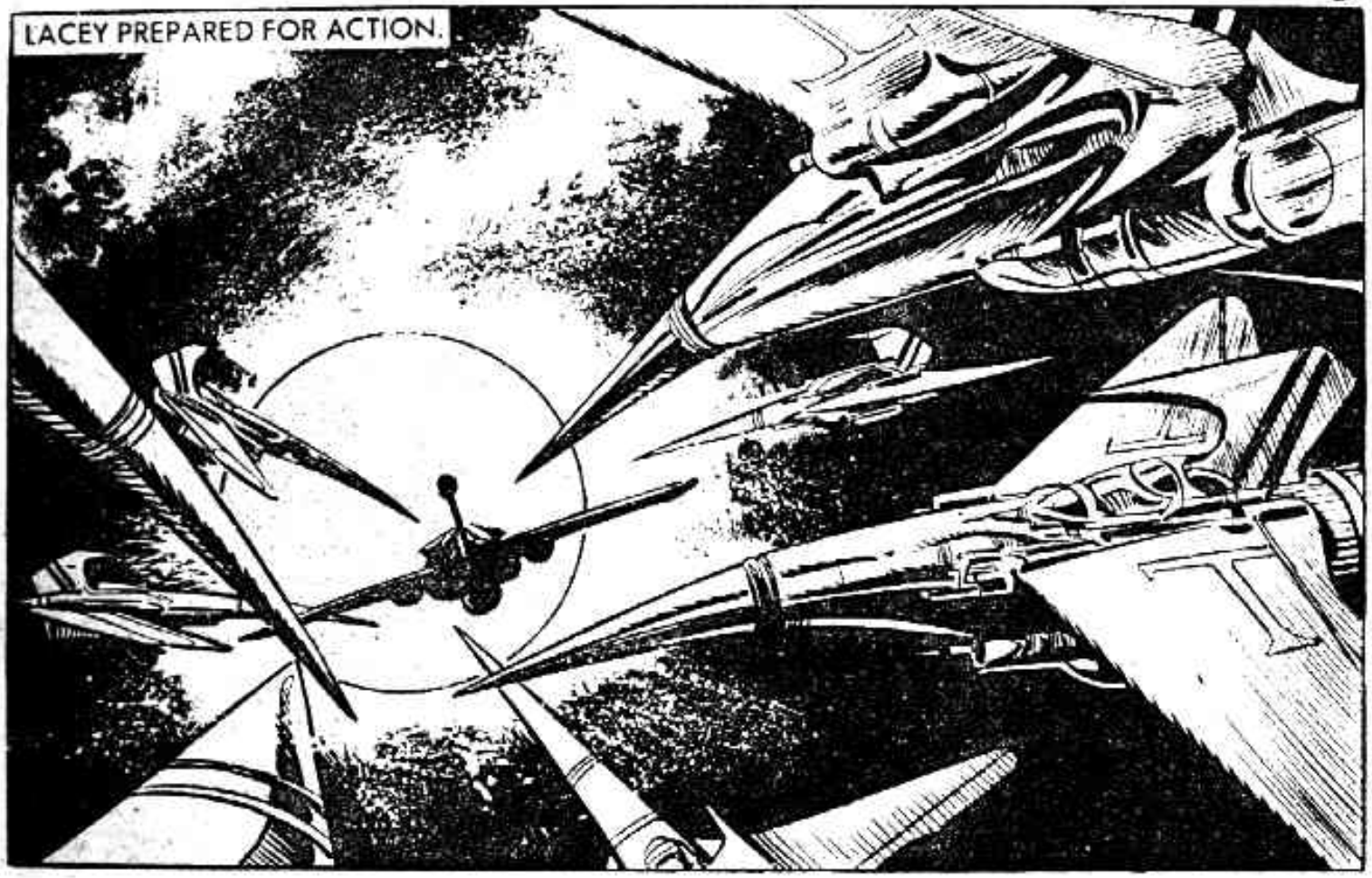
ONCE BACK AT EARTHBASE LACEY TOOK COMMAND OF HIS SHIP.
IF WE TAKE TO SPACE NOW—I THINK WE CAN SMASH THE ZWART.

NOT FAR AWAY, AT A SECRET ZWART BASE ON BELLEROPHON.

NO RESPONSE AT ALL FROM THE DOME.
TRY VISUAL SCANNER.

DESTROYED! HOW DID THE EARTHMEN GET THROUGH OUR FORCES TO DO THAT?

BRING IN ALL TECHNICIANS — IT WILL HAVE TO BE INDIVIDUAL MANUAL CONTROL FOR EACH VEHICLE.


LACEY PREPARED FOR ACTION.

THE MAIN FLEET IS FIVE UNITS AWAY, COMMANDER. THE FINAL DETACHMENT A FURTHER TWO UNITS BEHIND THEM.
NO ZWART FLEET YET, THANK THE STARS.
ALERT! I'VE JUST PICKED THEM UP ON SCAN.

ACTION . . . ACTION!

KEEP IN FORMATION!

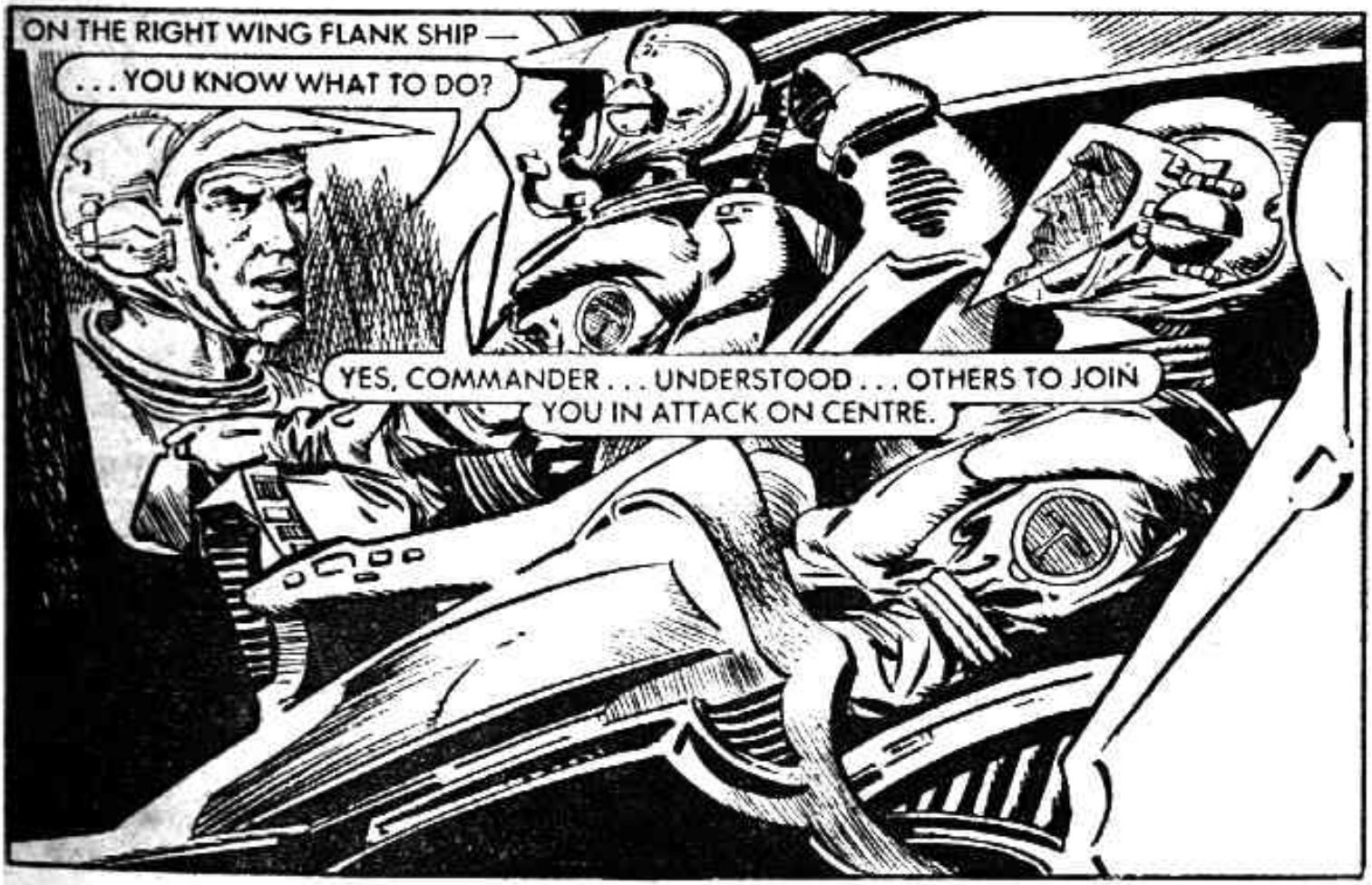
THE CLUSTER OF SHIPS BEHIND CENTRE MUST BE CRUISERS GUARDING TROOPSHIPS.
I HOPE THEY STAY THAT WAY. IT COULD HELP US.

THEY OUTNUMBER AND OUTFLANK US. THEY'LL TRY TO SURROUND US.

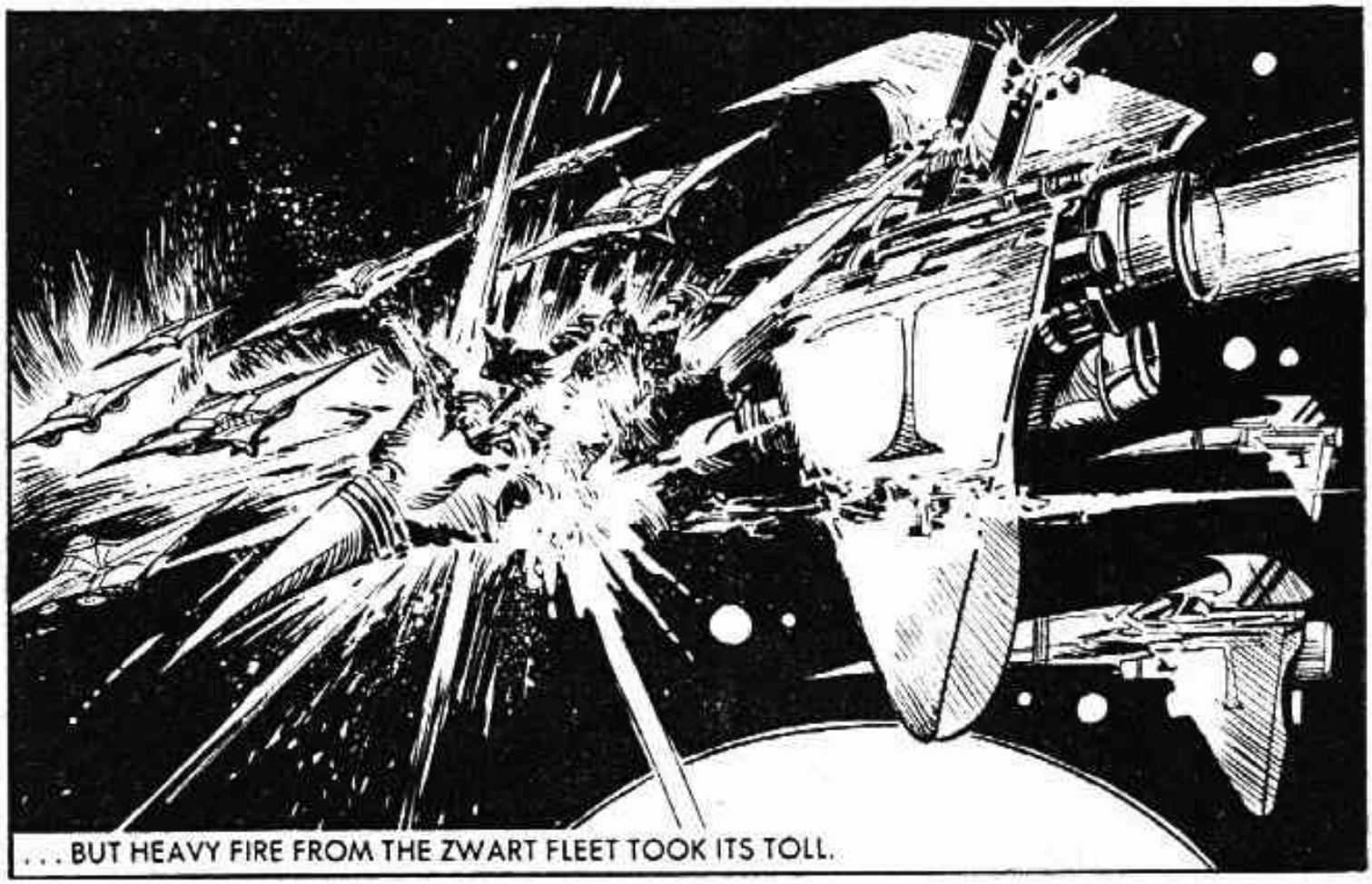
ACTION STATIONS! START COUNTDOWN!

ON THE ZWART LEADER SHIP —
WITHIN RANGE IN 10 KLIX, LEADER ASATYANAX!
AT LAST! SO LONG WE HAVE WAITED! NOW, THE END OF THEIR FLEET — BELLEROPHON WILL BE OURS, EARTH WILL BE DEFENCELESS!

PREPARE TO ATTACK!


ON THE RIGHT WING FLANK SHIP —
. . . YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?
YES, COMMANDER . . . UNDERSTOOD . . . OTHERS TO JOIN YOU IN ATTACK ON CENTRE.

THE EARTHSHIPS CLOSED AT FULL SPEED TO GET WITHIN RANGE. EACH SHIP'S COMPUTER DICTATED RANDOM EVASIVE ACTION . . .


. . . BUT HEAVY FIRE FROM THE ZWART FLEET TOOK ITS TOLL.

FIRE AT WILL!

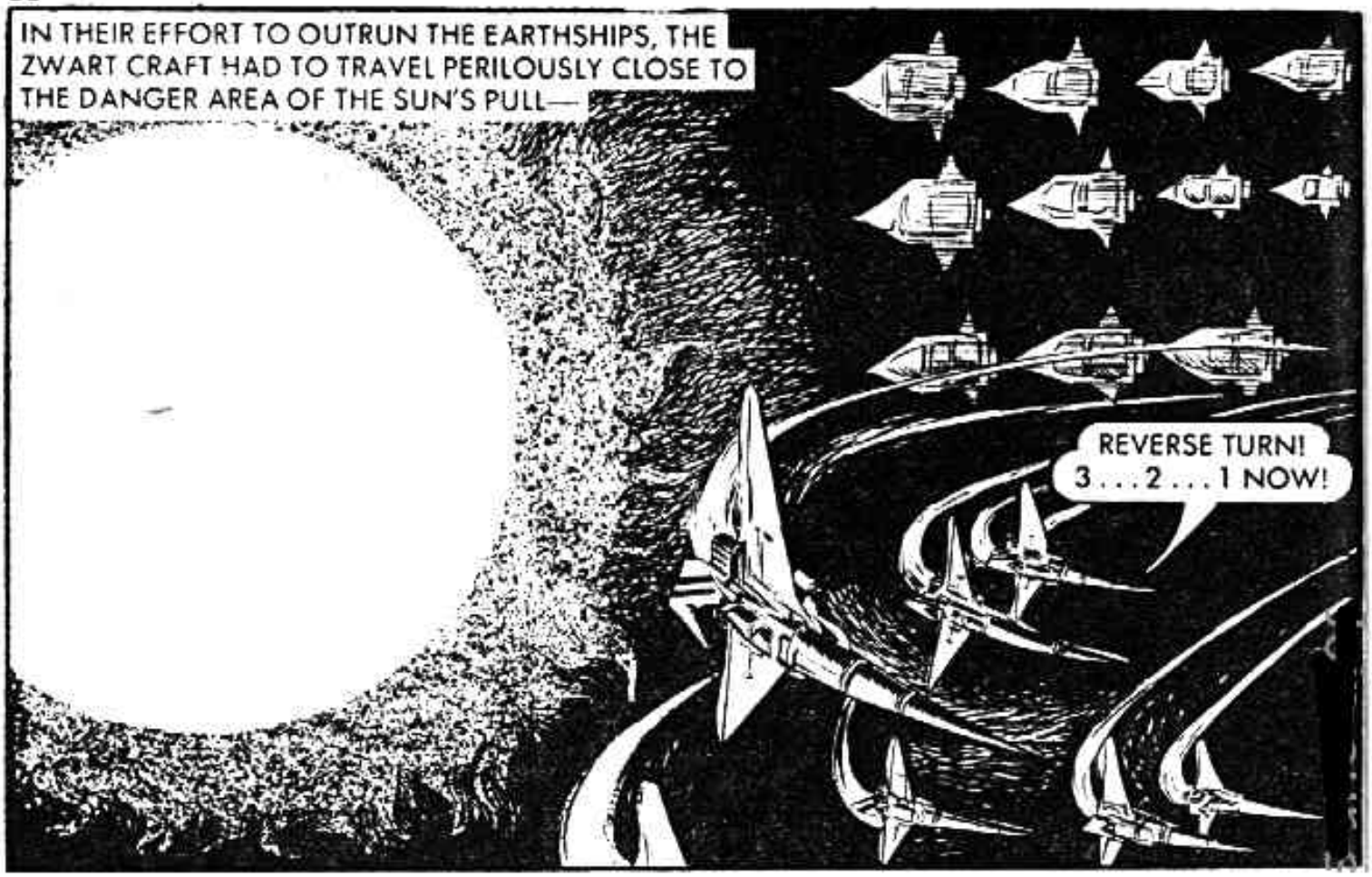
AT CLOSE RANGE, THE EARTHSHIPS DID WELL—

THE ZWART DON'T LIKE CLOSE COMBAT.

THE ZWART COMMANDER WAS AWARE OF THE PROBLEM.
WE'VE LOST THE ADVANTAGE OF LONG RANGE SHOOTING.

WARP AWAY AND TURN!

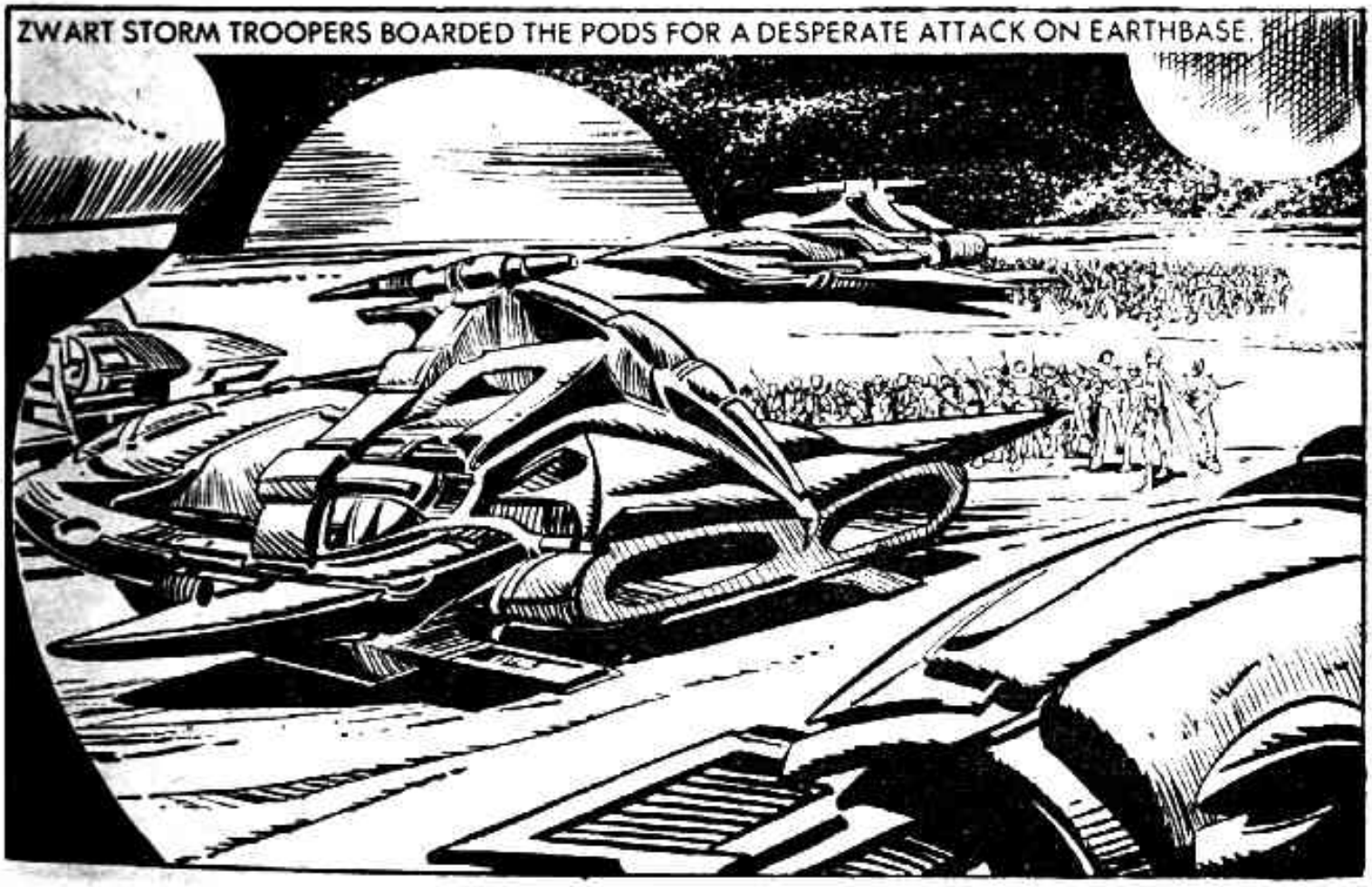
THE ZWART CRAFT SPED OFF PURSUED BY THE EARTH CRAFT—
THE ZWART ARE HEADING TOWARDS THE SUN— MAKE SURE THEY CAN'T TURN WITHOUT GETTING HIT.

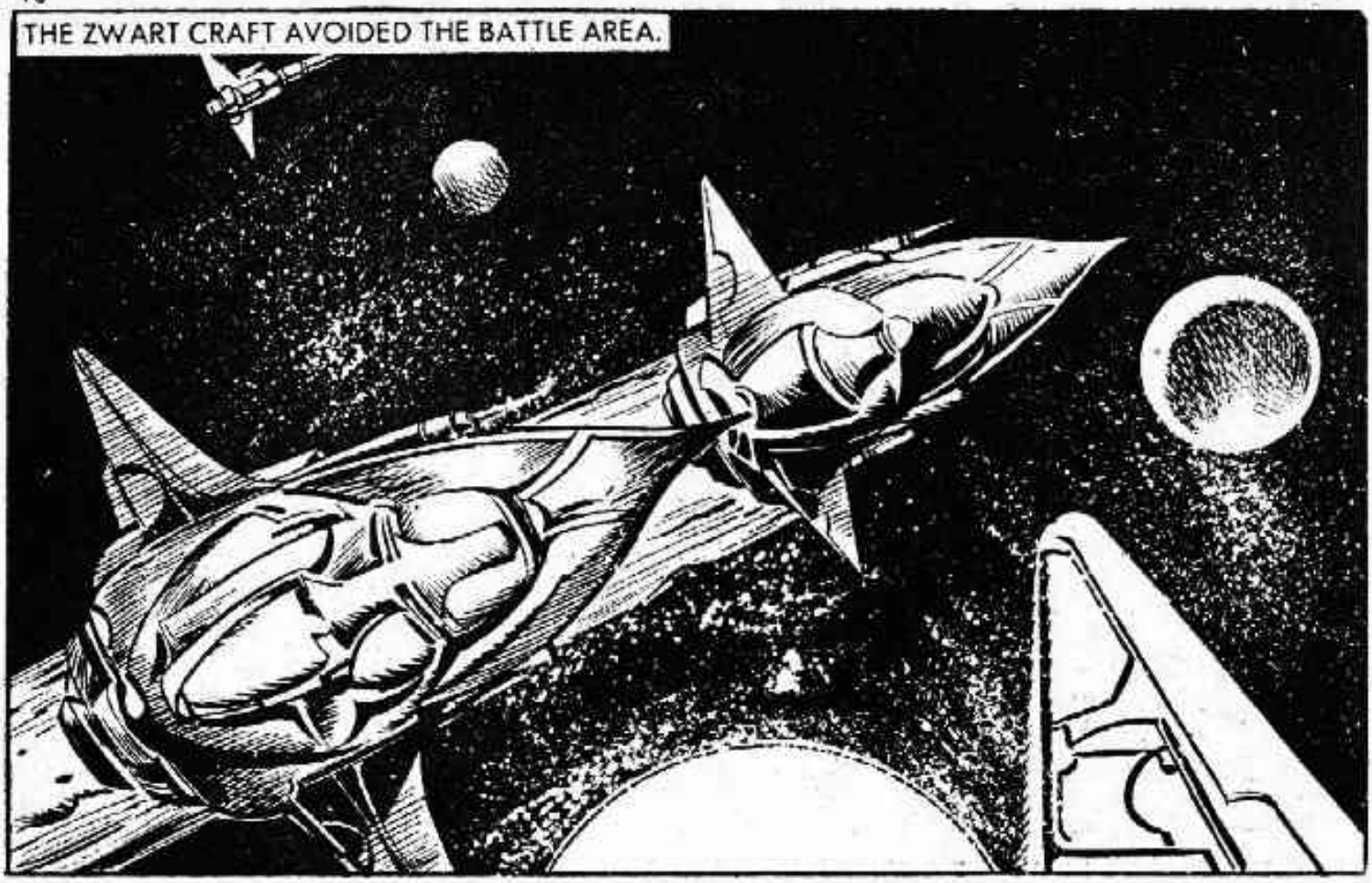

IN THEIR EFFORT TO OUTRUN THE EARTHSHIPS, THE ZWART CRAFT HAD TO TRAVEL PERILOUSLY CLOSE TO THE DANGER AREA OF THE SUN'S PULL—
REVERSE TURN! 3 . . . 2 . . . 1 NOW!

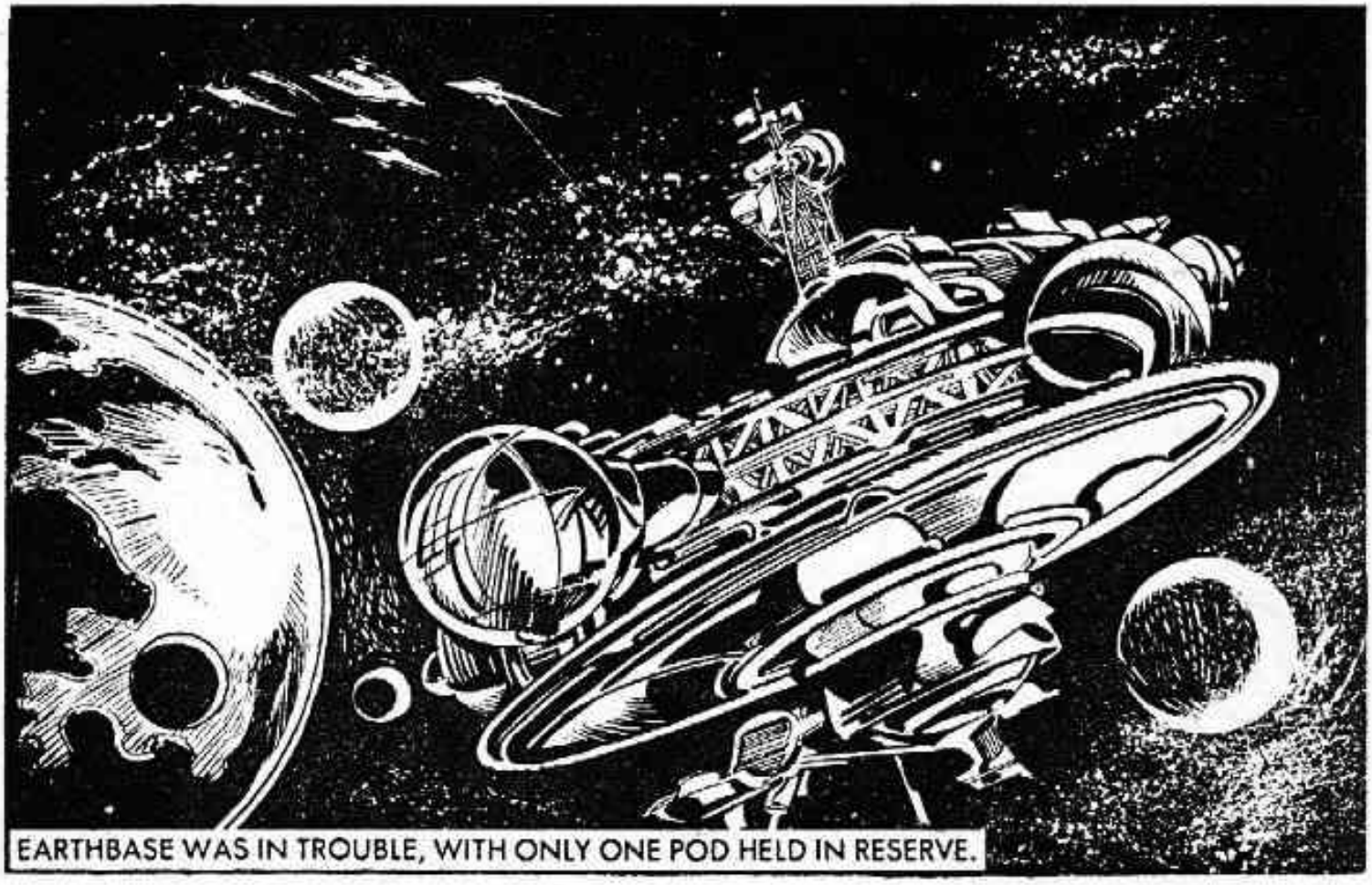
TURN TURN!

PULLED IN BY THE SUN'S INCREDIBLE FORCES, THE ZWART SHIPS HAD NO CHANCE.
WE ARE NOT PULLING AWAY. OUR SHIPS ARE HEAVIER THAN THEIRS.

AT ZWART BASE ON BELLEROPHON.
WE MUST BUY TIME. OUR BEST HOPE NOW IS TO KNOCK OUT EARTHBASE WITH AN ALL-OUT ATTACK.


ZWART STORM TROOPERS BOARDED THE PODS FOR A DESPERATE ATTACK ON EARTHBASE.


THE ZWART CRAFT AVOIDED THE BATTLE AREA.


EARTHBASE WAS IN TROUBLE, WITH ONLY ONE POD HELD IN RESERVE.

ZWART TRANSPORTS! SOUND THE ALERT! EVACUATE THE BUILDING! ACTIVATE THE POD!

EARTHBASE'S ONLY POD WAS DESTROYED.

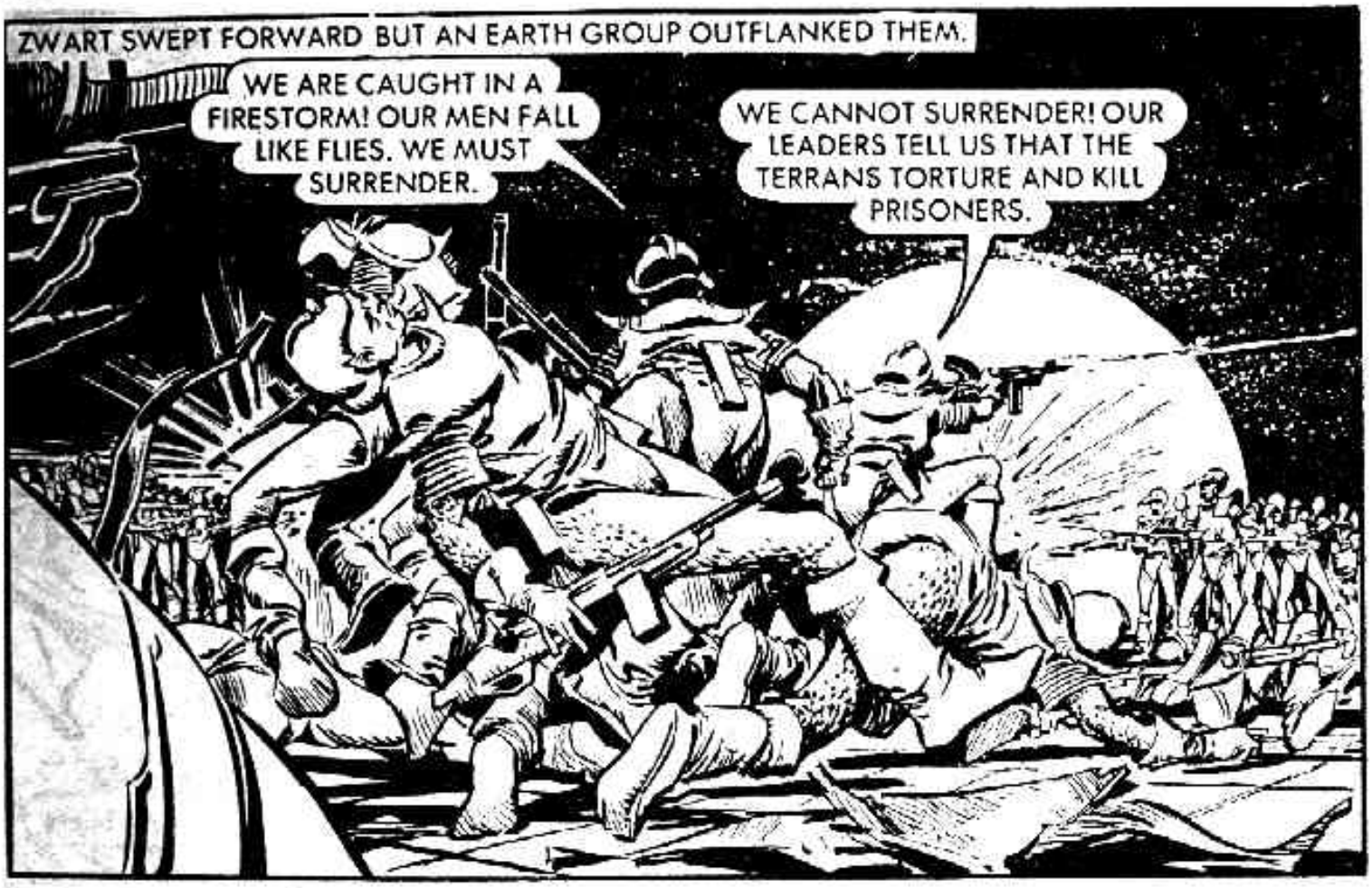
THEY'VE GOT OUR POD.

A DESPERATE DEFENCE WAS PUT UP—

BUT THE TROOPSHIP LANDED . . .

SEE IF YOU CAN ORGANISE AN ATTACK FROM BEHIND THEIR POD. WE'LL TRY TO KEEP THEM OCCUPIED.

ZWART SWARMED OUT TO ATTACK.


ZWART SWEPT FORWARD BUT AN EARTH GROUP OUTFLANKED THEM.
WE ARE CAUGHT IN A FIRESTORM! OUR MEN FALL LIKE FLIES. WE MUST SURRENDER.
WE CANNOT SURRENDER! OUR LEADERS TELL US THAT THE TERRANS TORTURE AND KILL PRISONERS.

BUT TO THE SURPRISE OF THE ZWART, THE SPACE ASSAULT SQUAD DID NOT MASSACRE THEM —
KILL ME THEN, YOU DOGS!
WE DO NOT KILL DEFENCELESS PEOPLE. COOL DOWN AND I'LL TAKE YOU TO OUR SKIPPER.

NOW WE HAVE THE SAME PROBLEM AS THE ZWART. WE HAVE TO MODIFY OUR VEHICLES FOR MANUAL CONTROL AS OUR AUTOCONTROL POD NO LONGER EXISTS.
SIR, A ZWART COMMANDER HAS BEEN TAKEN PRISONER.

I HAVE NO TIME TO SPEAK, COMMANDER, EXCEPT TO SAY THAT MY MEDTEAMS WILL TAKE CARE OF YOUR INJURED, AND IF YOU GIVE A LIST OF YOUR REQUIREMENTS TO THE QUARTERMASTER, WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO ACCOMMODATE YOU.

WE ARE TAUGHT THAT YOU TERRANS ARE CRUEL BARBARIANS, YET I HAVE SEEN NO SIGN OF THIS. I DO NOT UNDERSTAND, YET I SENSE YOU ARE HONEST.

WITH THE CONTROL UNITS OUT OF COMMISSION THE BATTLEFIELD WAS FOR ONCE SILENT AND STILL BY DAY.

IN A ZWART SPACECRAFT—
THE TERRANS ARE WINNING.

THE EARTHSHIPS GOT ON THE UNPROTECTED TAILS OF THE ZWART CRAFT WHERE THE MOTOR BLAST PREVENTED FORCESHIELDS OPERATING.

OUR SHIPS ARE OUT-MANOEUVRED! WE HAVE BEEN TRAPPED AND TRICKED! HEADS WILL ROLL IF WE DON'T GET THEIR FLAGSHIP.

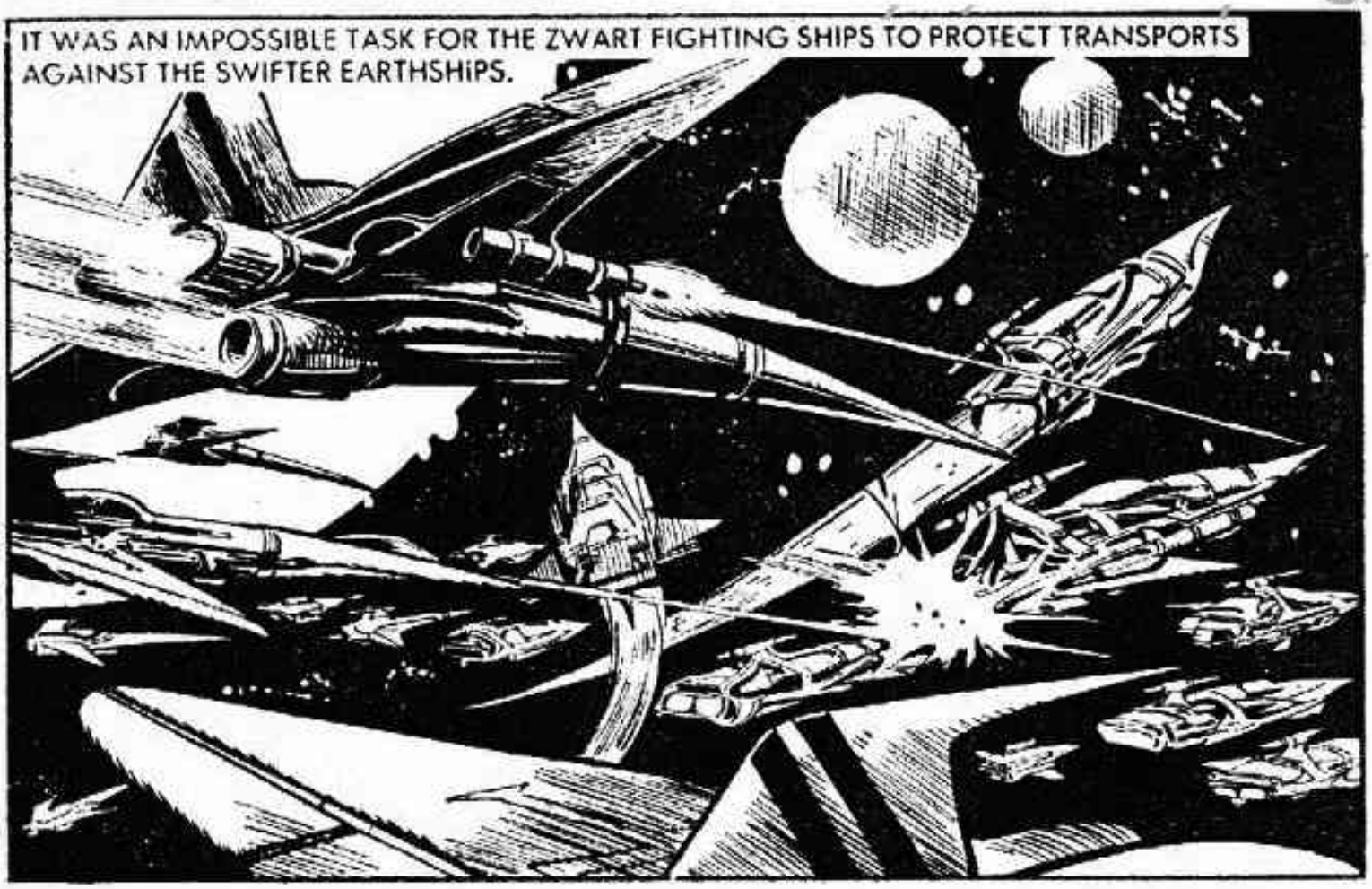
NEVER FORGET YOUR MAIN TASK IS TO COVER EACH OTHER, BUT IF YOU SEE STARLORD, THEIR FLAGSHIP — DESTROY IT!

THE TWO LEADERS ROVED THROUGH THE BATTLE, SEEKING EACH OTHER.
I MUST DESTROY THE EARTH COMMANDER'S CRAFT, ENDEAVOUR— OR DIE!

AT LAST . . . THE REINFORCEMENTS HAVE ARRIVED.

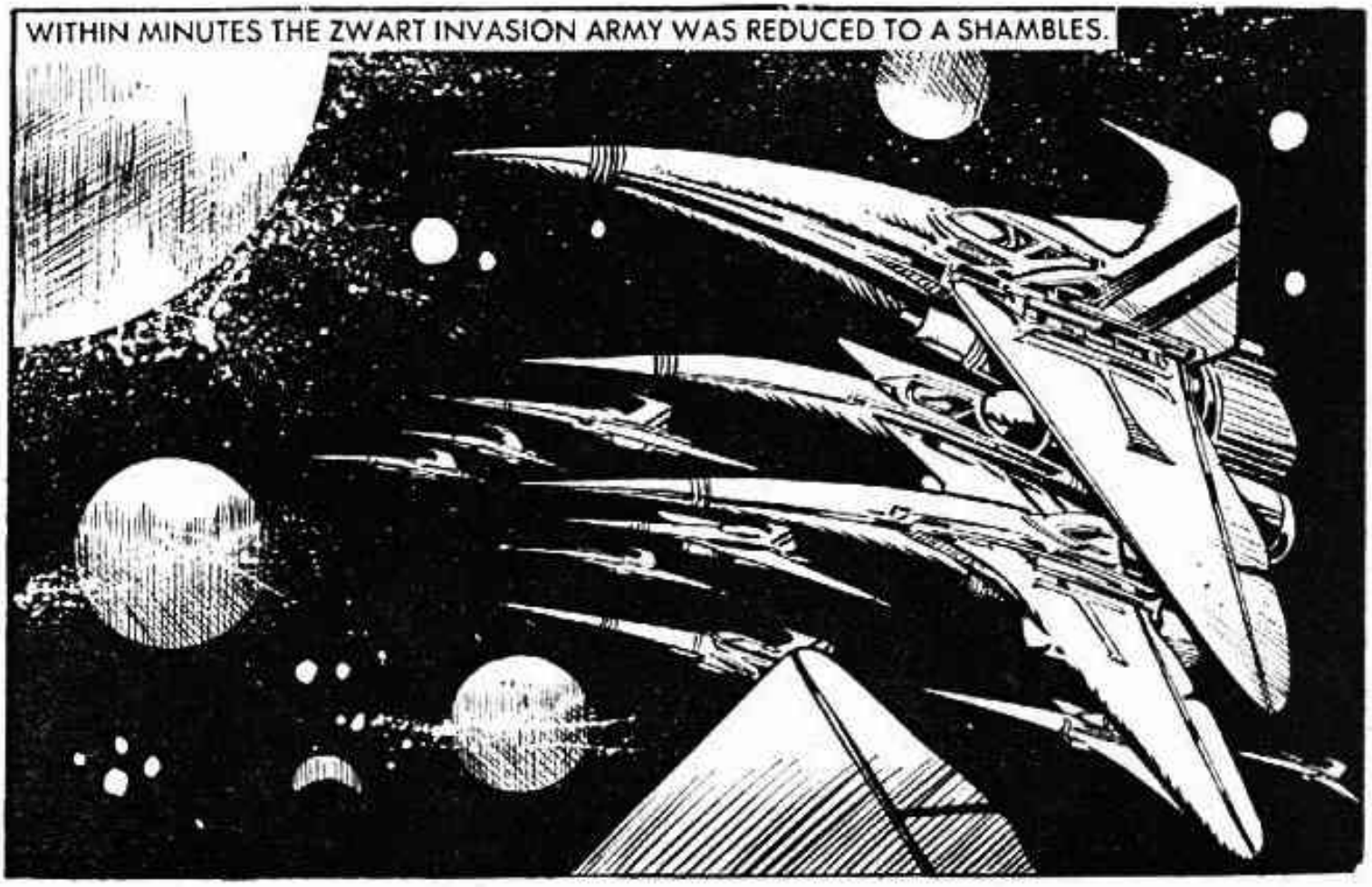
THEIR CRAFT ARE DENSER THAN OURS, SO THEY HAVE DIFFICULTY TURNING . . .
NOT TOO LATE FOR THE ACTION I HOPE! THIS IS WHERE WE WEIGH IN WITH OUR CONTRIBUTION.

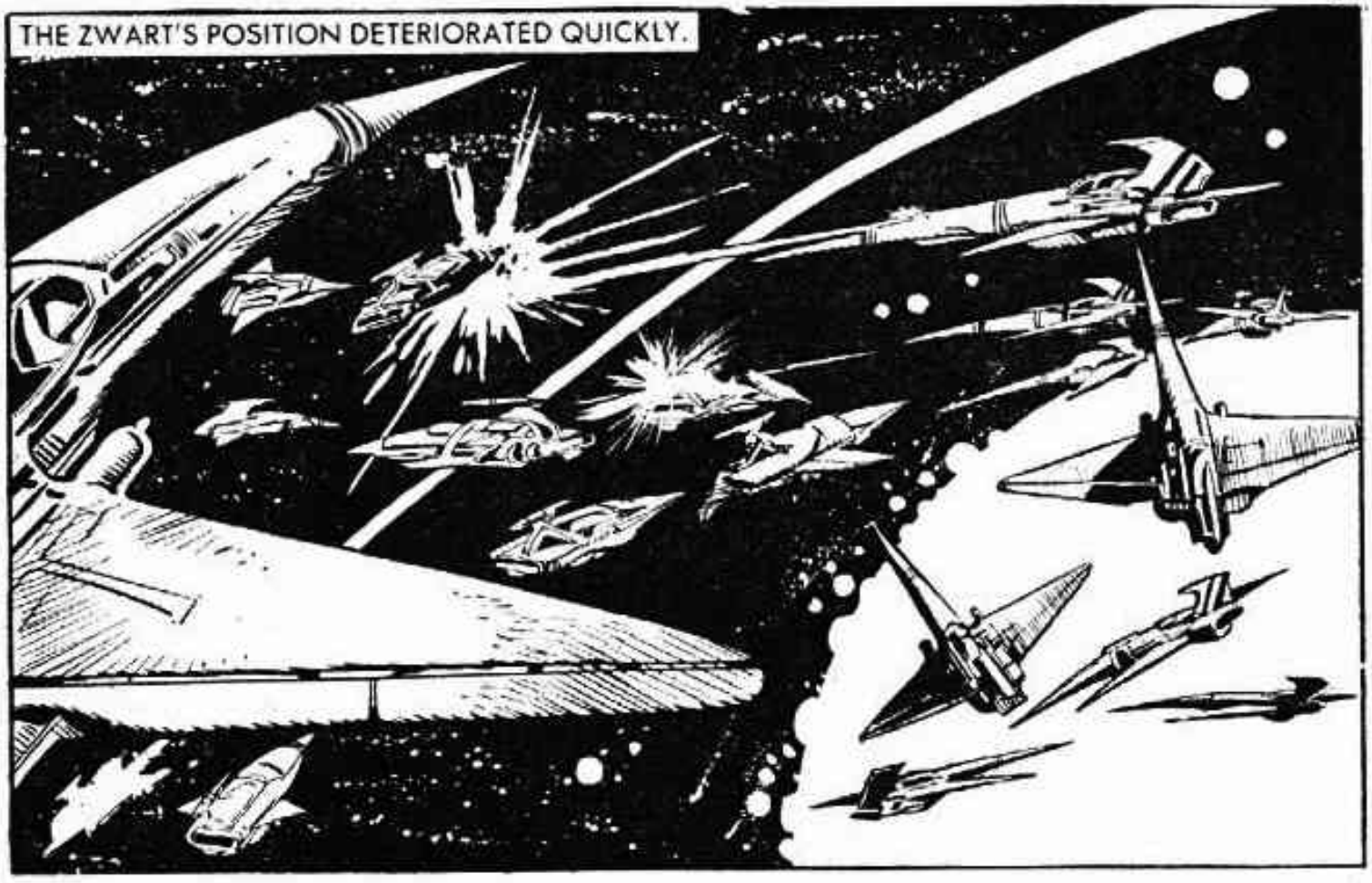
ATTACK FROM THE REAR.

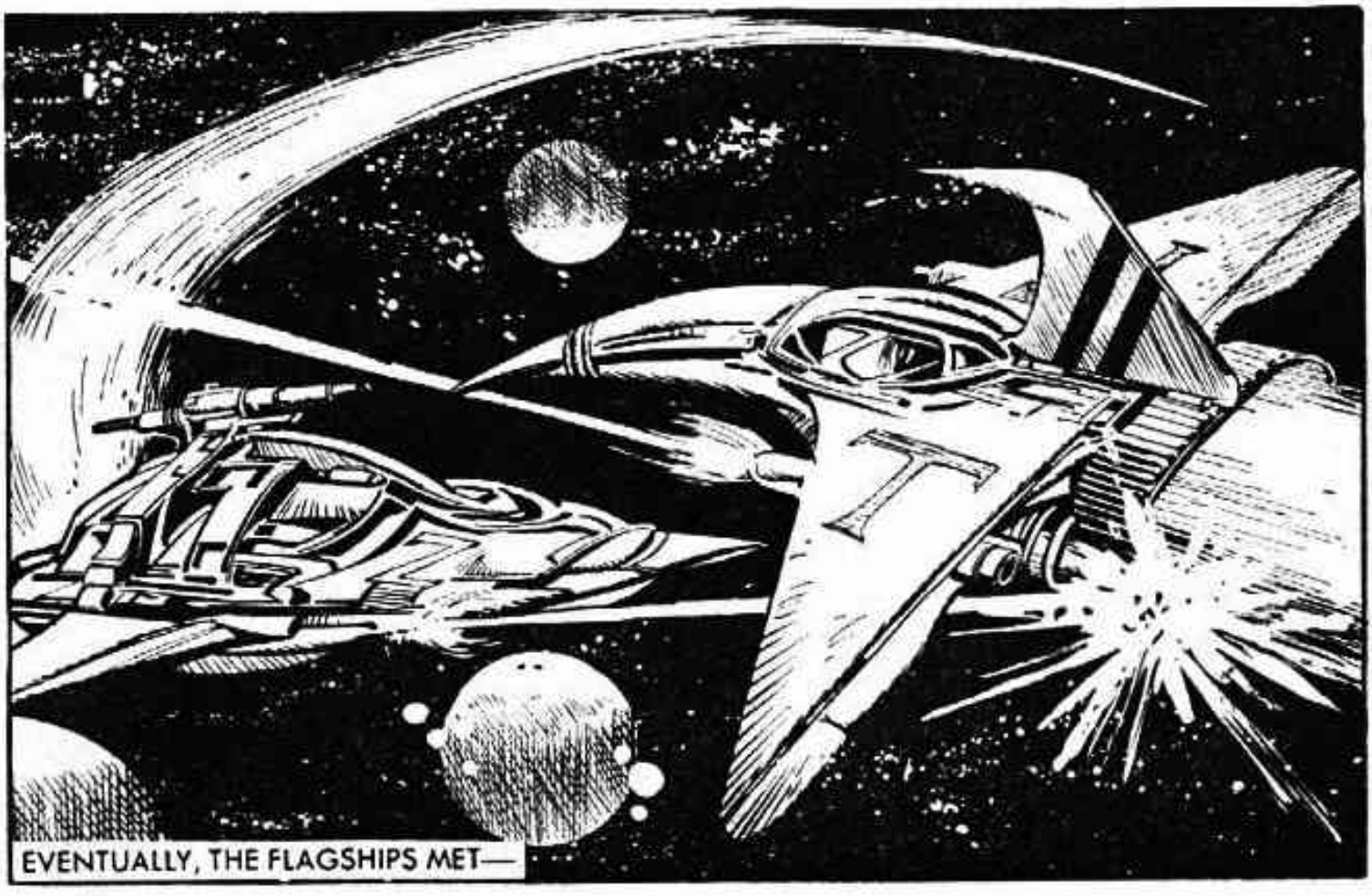

IT WAS AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK FOR THE ZWART FIGHTING SHIPS TO PROTECT TRANSPORTS AGAINST THE SWIFTER EARTHSHIPS.

BALE OUT! BALE OUT!

SAFE IN ESCAPE BUBBLES, THE ZWART DRIFTED CLEAR OF THEIR DOOMED CRAFT.


WITHIN MINUTES THE ZWART INVASION ARMY WAS REDUCED TO A SHAMBLES.


THE ZWART'S POSITION DETERIORATED QUICKLY.


EVENTUALLY, THE FLAGSHIPS MET—

THE ZWART HAVE HIT US!

WE'RE JUST ABOUT FINISHED!
NO, WE'RE NOT! CONVERT WARP SPEED TO ELECTROMAGNETISM.

" STARLORD " WAS DRAWN HELPLESSLY ALONGSIDE " ENDEAVOUR " AS THE ELECTRO FORCES BUILT UP.

THE VESSELS LOCKED TOGETHER BY TWISTED METAL, SPILLED MEN OUT INTO SPACE.

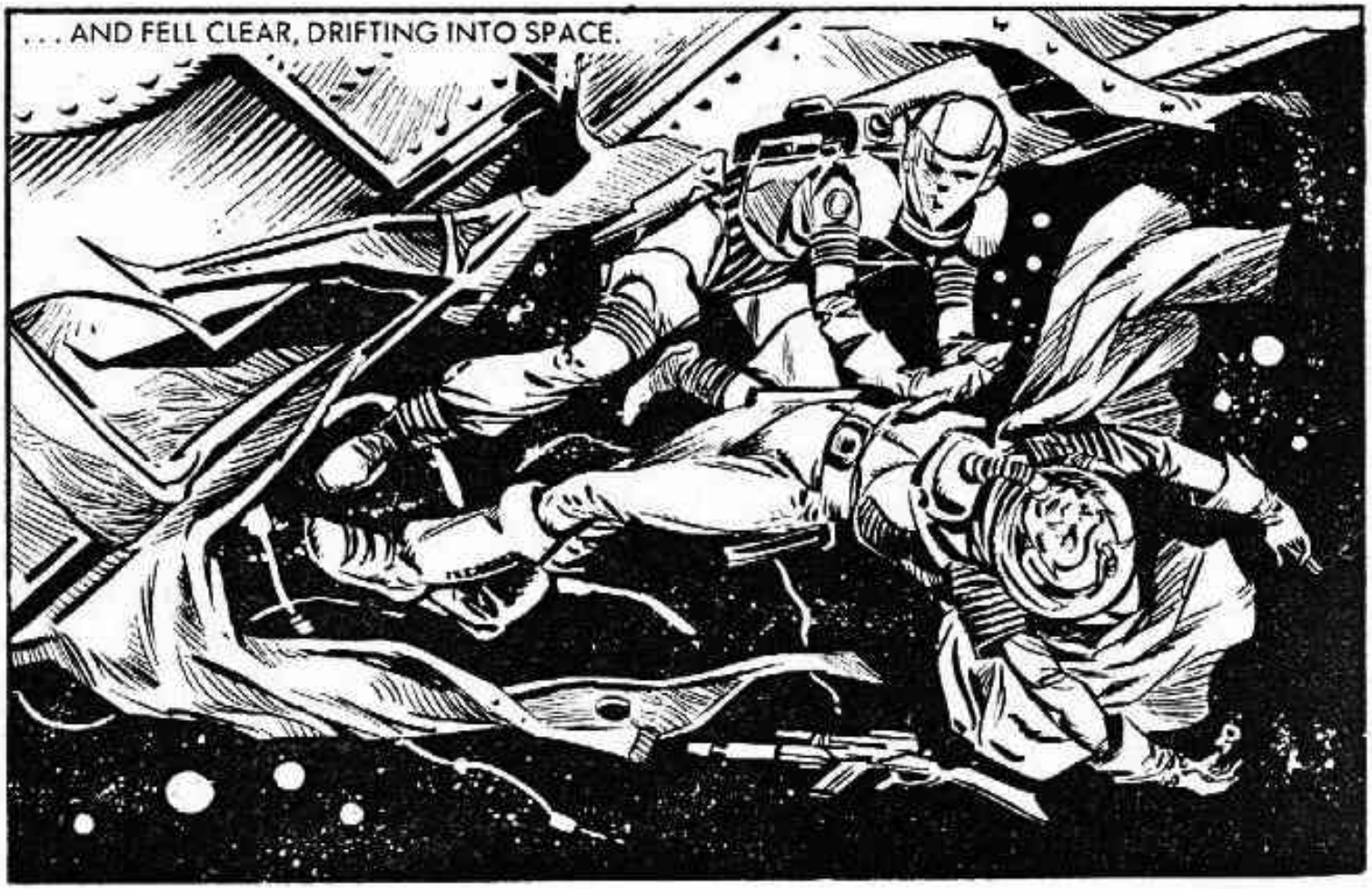
AT ONE END OF THE COMBINED WRECK . . .
ATTACK!

THE DESPERATE HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING RAGED ON—

ALL HANDS TO DECK "C"!

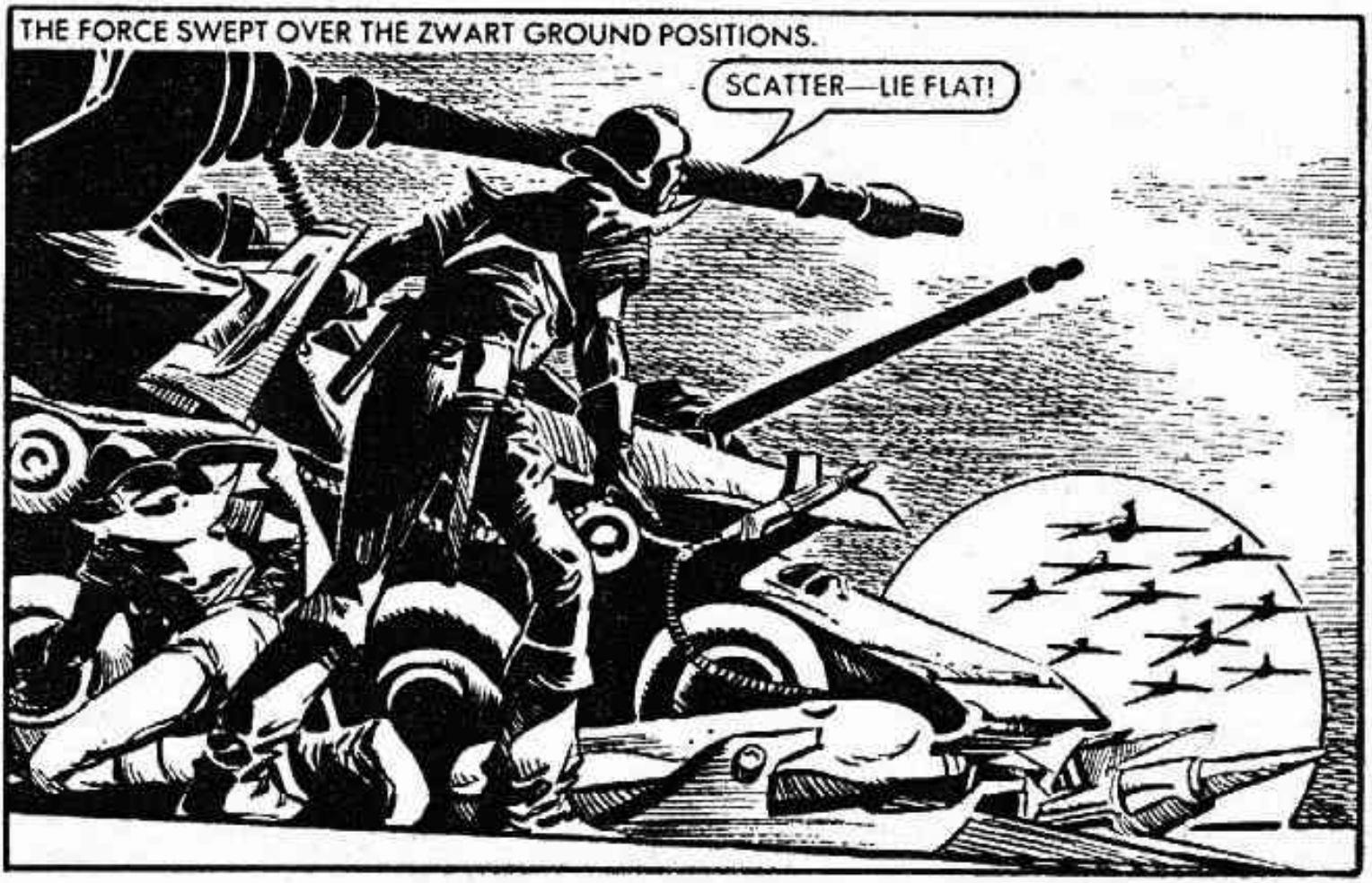
AS LACY ATTEMPTED TO STOP THE BOARDING
HE WAS CONFRONTED BY ASATYANAX, THE ZWART LEADER.

THEY LEAPT AT EACH OTHER...


...AND FELL CLEAR, DRIFTING INTO SPACE.

BACK ON BELLEROPHON—
WE PROBABLY OUTNUMBER THE ZWART NOW.

I'M SURE IT WAS THE RIGHT MOVE TO GET THE PODS WORKING FIRST AND BRING THEM BACK.
YES! I'M GOING TO RISK SOME OF THEM IN A RAID OF MY OWN.


THE FORCE SWEPT OVER THE ZWART GROUND POSITIONS.
SCATTER—LIE FLAT!

THE ZWART POSITION WAS DESTROYED.

MILES ABOVE THE PLANET—
I'D BETTER BELT US TOGETHER—I DON'T FANCY DYING ALONE.

STANDARD TRANSLATOR PACKS ALLOWED THEM TO TALK—
FOR US THE FIGHTING IS OVER.
INDEED! AND OXYGEN SUPPLIES ARE RUNNING OUT.

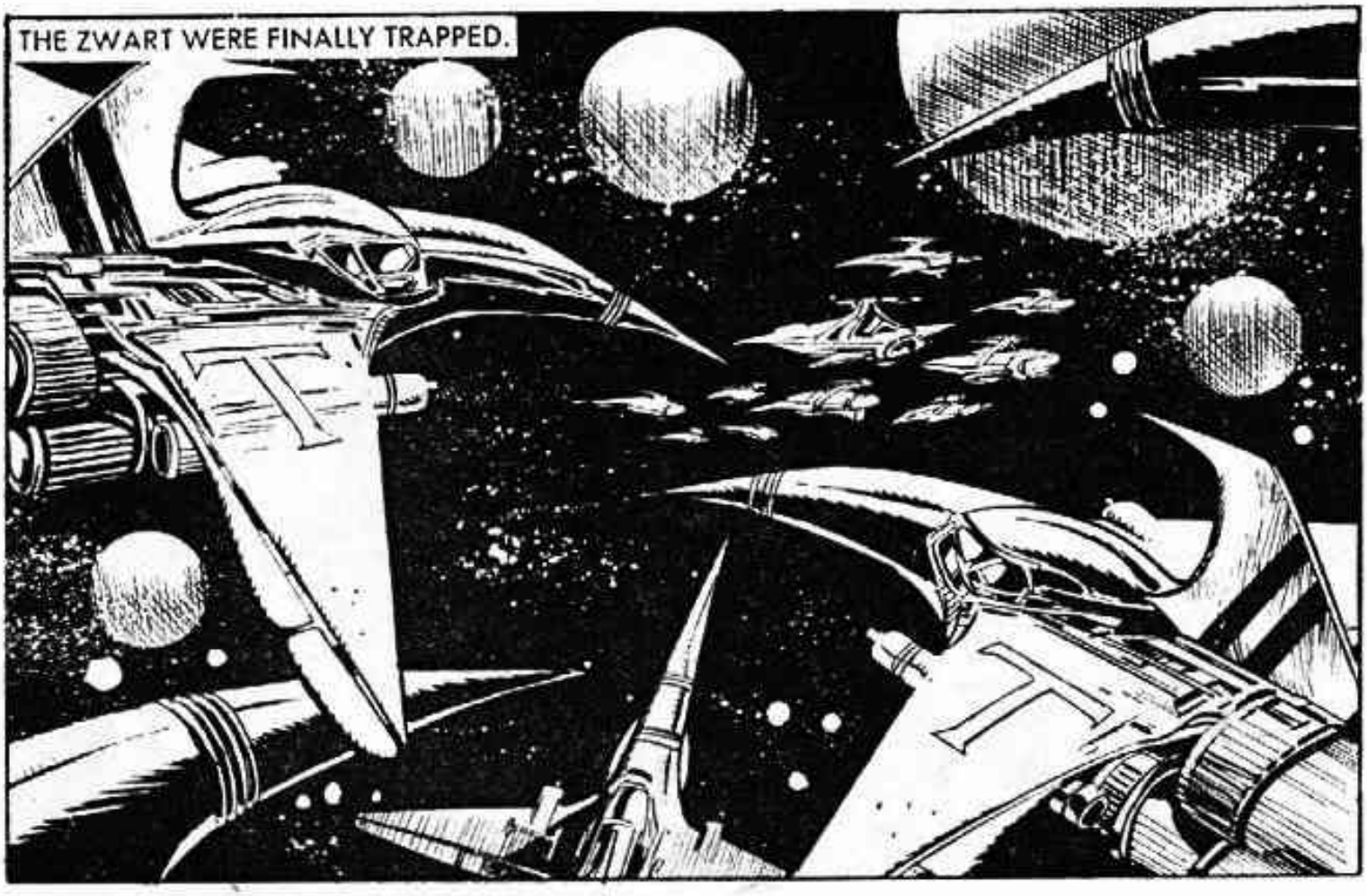
WE ARE DOOMED TO DRIFT FOREVER.

IT SEEMS ODD THAT WE SHOULD BE UNITED IN DEATH.
YES! PERHAPS A PEACE COULD HAVE BEEN AGREED.

ON A ZWART SHIP—
STARLORD HAS GONE!

WE MUST FIGHT ON!
BUT OUR LEADER IS DEAD.

NOW WE FIGHT ONLY TO AVOID CAPTURE. YOU KNOW WHAT EARTHMEN DO TO PRISONERS.

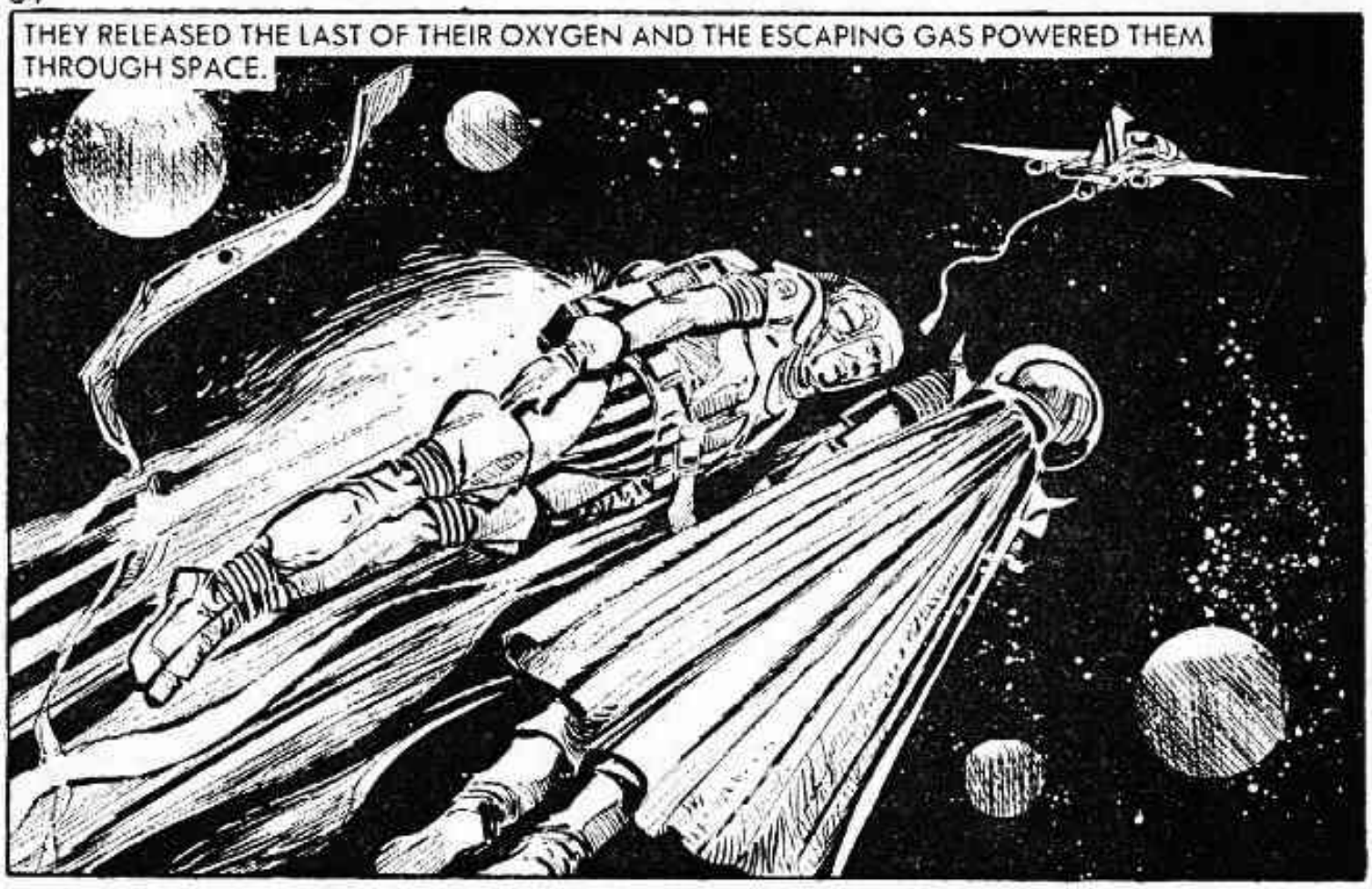

THE ZWART WERE FINALLY TRAPPED.

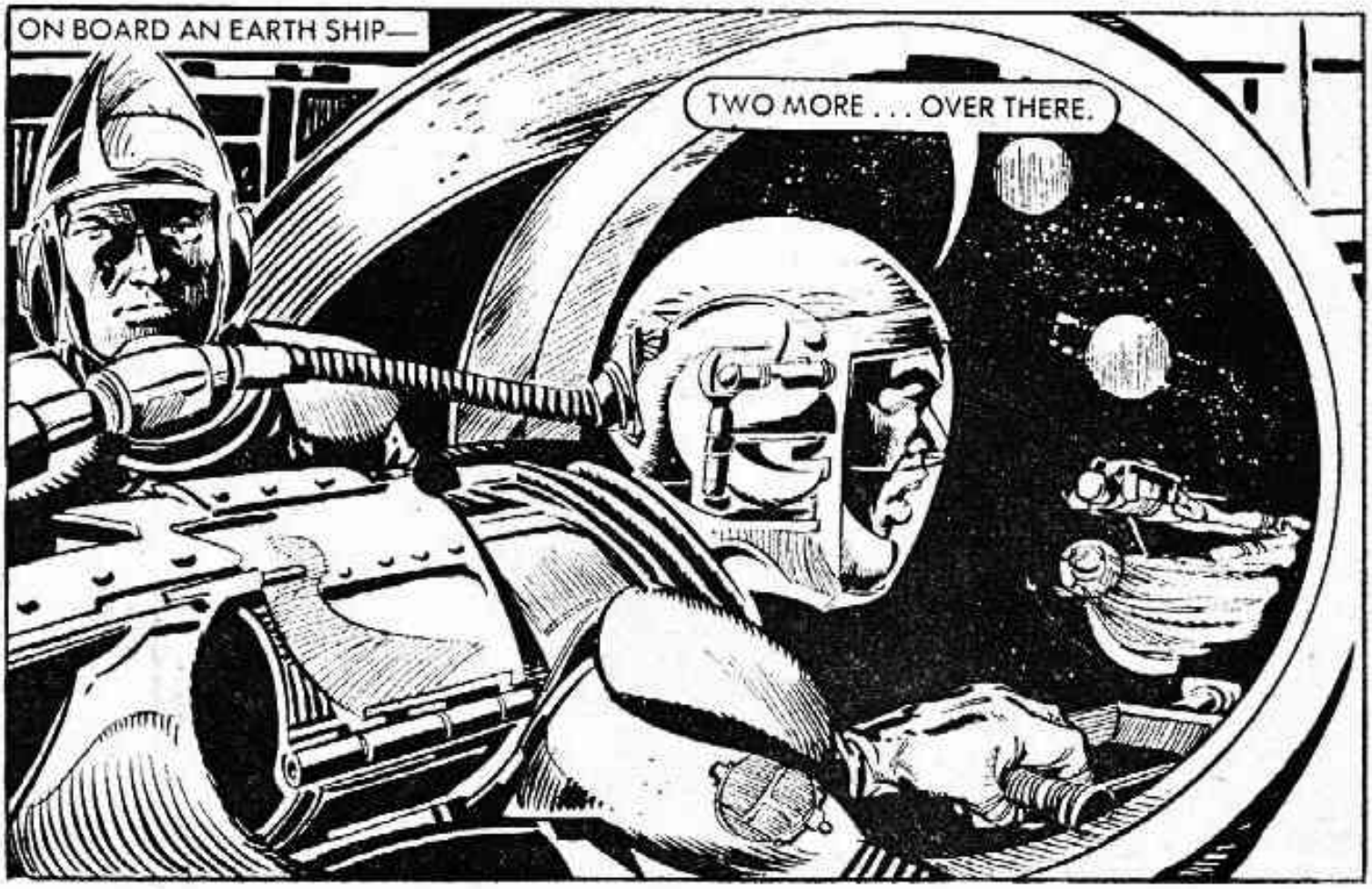
THE LAST OF THE ENEMY WERE FORCED TO SURRENDER.

EARTHSHIPS DRIFTED THROUGH THE BATTLE ZONE, PICKING UP FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE.
WHY DO YOU SAVE ME? WE ARE TOLD OF YOUR CRUELTY TO PRISONERS.
YOU ARE A FELLOW SOLDIER, AND LIKE ME, YOU FIGHT WHEN YOU'RE TOLD. THE WAR IS OVER—SO'S THE KILLING.

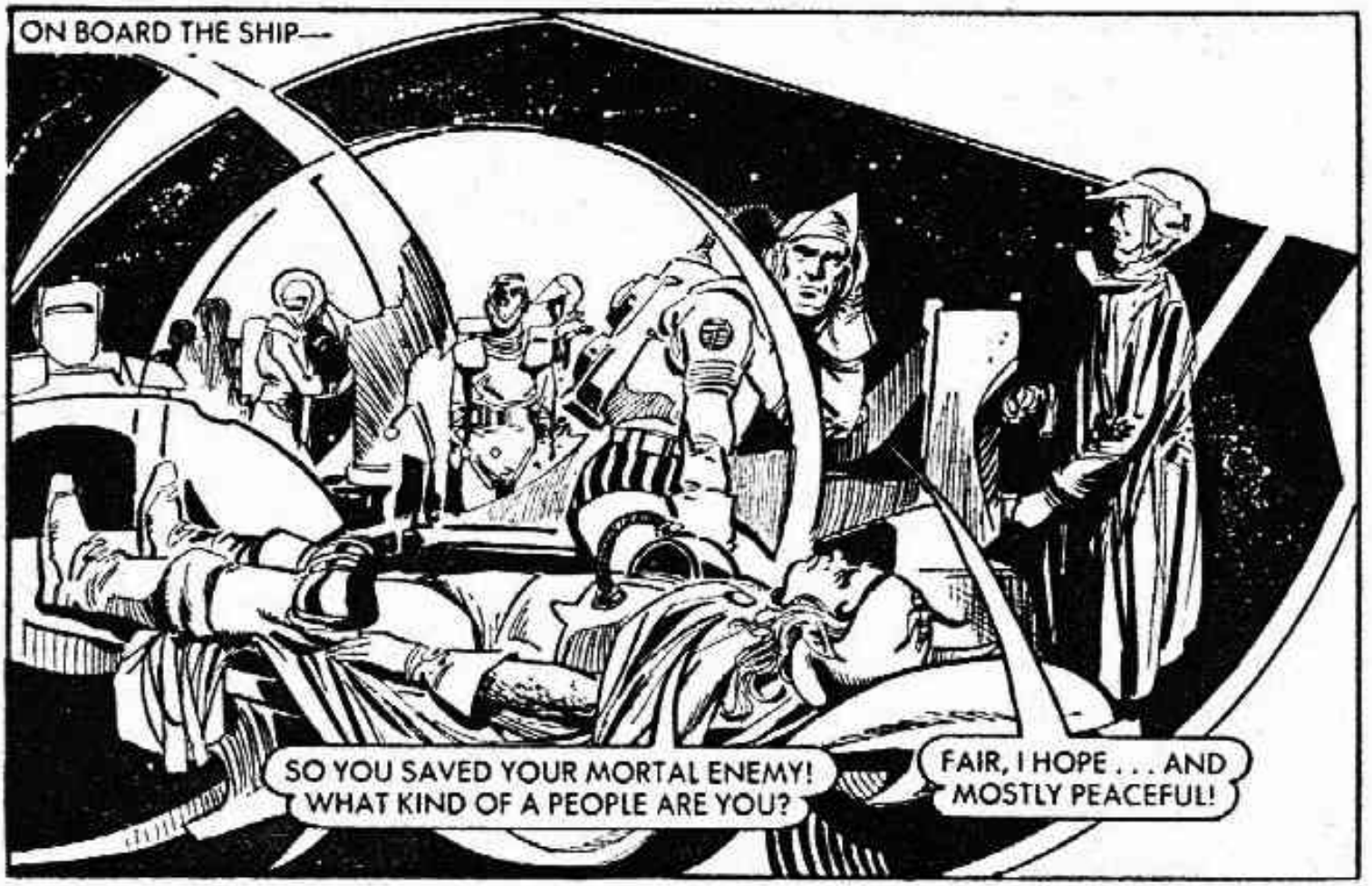
DEEP IN SPACE, FAR FROM HELP—
ZWART LEADER! I HAVE TWO MINUTES OF OXYGEN LEFT. HOW MUCH HAVE YOU?
ABOUT THE SAME! WHY DO YOU ASK?

IF WE RELEASE WHAT IS LEFT AT THE SAME TIME WE MAY GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO BE NOTICED!
WE WILL DIE JUST A LITTLE SOONER IF WE FAIL.


THEY RELEASED THE LAST OF THEIR OXYGEN AND THE ESCAPING GAS POWERED THEM THROUGH SPACE.


ON BOARD AN EARTH SHIP—
TWO MORE . . . OVER THERE.

WINCH! HAUL IN!


ON BOARD THE SHIP—
SO YOU SAVED YOUR MORTAL ENEMY! WHAT KIND OF A PEOPLE ARE YOU?
FAIR, I HOPE . . . AND MOSTLY PEACEFUL!

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